

FOREIGN SCENES

AND

TRAVELLING RECREATIONS.

By JOHN HOWISON, Esq.

OF THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S SERVICE,
AUTHOR OF SKETCHES OF UPPER CANADA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

EDINBURGH :

PUBLISHED BY

OLIVER & BOYD, TWEEDDALE-COURT;

AND

GEO. B. WHITTAKER, LONDON.

1825.

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LIFE IN INDIA.

LIFE IN INDIA.

ONE morning, after a six weeks' voyage from the Cape, I was roused by an unusual noise upon deck, and, on going there, found myself in sight of the continent of India, and surrounded by a number of its natives. The coast of Malabar lay a few miles off, and my fellow-passengers were gazing with intense curiosity upon the land in which most of them had the prospect of spending the greater part of their lives. I believe its appearance disappointed every one. A barren, treeless, rocky, and apparently uninhabited tract of land stretched before us, and formed the exterior of that region which is

usually considered the garden of the world, the source of exhaustless wealth, and the theatre of all that is splendid, beautiful, and luxurious.

The scene merited a glance of a few moments' duration only ; and I directed my attention to the natives who had come from the shore in a canoe, with poultry, fruit, and vegetables, for sale. Their dress consisted of a large piece of cloth wrapped round the loins, and a conical hat made of the bark of some tree. Their colour was a bright copper, and they were tolerably well formed, and had mild, though weather-beaten, countenances ; in which, however, there was an expression of imbecility that corresponded well with the languor of their carriage and motions. They talked loud and constantly, but apparently without any purpose, except when selling their commodities ; for no one answered the interrogatories of his neighbour, or even seemed to listen to what he said. After a long parley, the ship's steward purchased most of their articles, and they jumped into their canoe, which was one-third full of

water, and paddled off, one of them baling it out with a cocoa-nut-shell.

Such was our first introduction to the shores of the East, and to their primitive inhabitants. All parties seemed to feel that it was miserably deficient in that interest and splendour which they had anticipated. The weak, half-naked, talkative, miserable-looking people, who had visited us, were rather unlike children of the sun, and the barren coast of Malabar more resembled the wilds of the North, than a part of the most fertile and favoured land that extends between the tropics. We looked in vain for that magnificence which is usually believed to characterize the productions of art and of nature in Asia. We saw neither forests nor luxuriant vegetation, and bare rocks diversified the face of the country, instead of palaces, mosques, and pagodas.

However, the coast, as we proceeded towards Bombay, became better cultivated and more interesting. We had a good view of Tellichery and Goa, and of several other settle-

ments, and occasionally enjoyed a glimpse of some fine scenery a little way back in the country; for, being obliged to beat up the channel, we sometimes were within half a mile of the shore, and sometimes quite out of sight of land. The wind was so gentle, that we seldom made more than four or five leagues in twenty-four hours, which seemed very tantalizing, when we considered that we were not more than two hundred miles from our port of destination.

At length we one evening discerned the white tower of the Bombay lighthouse, which soon after sunset began to exhibit a brilliant and steady blaze. A beacon always is an interesting object when seen at sea, but becomes particularly so, when it forms a guiding star to the spot where one's hopes, pleasures, and interests are to be centred for a series of years. The night was calm and clear, and the moon rose beautifully behind some hills, at first dusky, large, and undefined, but afterwards bright, warm, and soft in its outline. The richness of its light, the quietness and reposing aspect of

the coast, the rippling of the sea, and the calmness of the air, were all in harmony with an Asiatic climate, and well calculated to dispose the mind to indulge in the reflections which obtrude themselves upon those who are on the eve of landing in a foreign country, adopting an untried mode of life, and entering an unknown circle of society.

Next morning we entered Bombay harbour, and saw the island and town before us, which are celebrated for their beauty when viewed from sea ; however, the fineness of the prospect has been much overrated. The islands of Salsette and Elephanta are rather pretty, the latter being well wooded ; but that of Bombay appears very barren, and has no timber upon it, except some cocoa-nut groves, which look extremely awkward and disagreeable when seen in any numbers, and when not intermixed with other kinds of trees.

I went ashore soon after the anchor had been dropped. On approaching the quay, I found myself surrounded by undescribable

noise, tumult, and confusion. It was necessary to disembark at the bottom of a flight of stone steps, leading from the beach to the wharf; but we could hardly gain the spot, such was the number of boats collected around it. These were full of natives, who talked as loud as possible, and without intermission, and were quarrelling with each other continually, and endeavouring to get near the landing-place; sometimes pushing with their oars to effect this, and sometimes leaping into the water, and resolutely hauling their own boats forwards between those belonging to their adversaries. The sea, within twenty yards of the beach, was crowded with half-naked people, carrying bales of goods to several lighters, which had been prevented by the shallowness of the water from coming close to the wharf. The men on board of them were vociferating to the porters to walk faster, and the latter were talking to each other, and often stumbling so much, that their burdens seemed about to be precipitated into the waves. On gaining the top of the stairs, I got involved in a

crowd of a more varied and less noisy description. I was first addressed by four palanquin-bearers, who offered to carry me into the fort. They threw open the doors of the palanquin, and motioned me to get into it; while a boy, apparently belonging to their party, held a sort of umbrella over my head, to protect me from the sun. The men had the Asiatic countenance, but were almost as black as negroes, and their figures, though of slight proportions, were muscular. They wore white cotton drawers, and short jackets of the same stuff, and had coarse cloth turbans upon their heads. While I refused their services, three men with papers in their hands approached me, making many obsequious gestures. They all were dressed exactly alike, and in much better style than the palanquin-bearers. Each had a vest of fine cotton, which was tight at the throat, and fitted close to the body as far down as the waist, where it became loose and flowing, and reached to the knee; under this they wore very wide striped trowsers. These were so long as nearly to conceal their

feet and the crimson slippers upon them. Their countenances were grave, mild, and not disagreeable; but, at the same time, carried in them a lurking expression of knavery and cunning. I found that they were Parsee servants out of employ, and that they wished to enter my service. Each displayed a variety of certificates of good character; and, as I was in need of an attendant, I hired the one who appeared to understand English best. I had scarcely done this, when I was startled by the sound of rapid footsteps behind me, and, on looking round, saw a string of natives, every two of whom had a large bamboo between them, with its extremities resting upon their shoulders, and having a trunk or box suspended from the middle of it. They were hurrying along at a very quick pace, unmindful of the exclamations of a European young man who followed them, panting with heat and covered with dust. A crowd of palanquin-bearers, Parsee servants, native boatmen, and boys with umbrellas, surrounded him, and were addressing him at the same mo-

ment, and raising their voices to make themselves heard. He evidently neither understood what they said, nor wanted their services, but seemed fearful of losing his baggage, which was on its way to the custom-house ; and thither I observed them following him with unabating clamour and pertinacity, till they all got out of sight. I was now hastening to my palanquin, when a voice of expostulation induced me to stop, and a most extraordinary figure approached, and demanded alms. He was an old man, with a flowing white beard and emaciated visage. His hair was long, black, and matted, and his cheeks and forehead were marked with different kinds of paint, which gave him a most hideous aspect. He supported himself with a large stick ; and this seemed very necessary ; for his limbs looked withered, nerveless, and distorted, and he walked apparently with pain and difficulty. He had a piece of ragged cloth wrapped round his loins, the rest of his body being naked, and covered with strange figures and characters. His demeanour was not marked by the humility

of a beggar, but exhibited a mixture of haughtiness, self-possession, and indifference, which formed a striking burlesque upon the abjectness and misery of his personal appearance. Having freed myself from his importunities, I leaped into my palanquin, and was soon on my way to the Bombay esplanade.

On arriving there I took up my abode in a tent which belonged to a fellow-passenger, who had before lived in India for several years. It was lofty and spacious, and altogether much more comfortable than I had previously conceived it possible for a canvass-habitation to be. But the tents in India are very different from those used in Britain. The interior part of the former consists of a conical fly, supported by one or by two poles, according to its dimensions. From the edge of the fly, walls of canvass, kept straight by bamboos fixed upon them, descend to the ground, into which the sharp ends of the bamboos are fixed, in order to keep the cloth upright and on the stretch. The inside of the whole is lined with calico; and, if the tent be

well pitched, its walls and roof look remarkably smooth, close, and neat. Another fly, and other walls of larger dimensions than those just described, are erected over and around the latter, but about three feet distant from them. Thus, there are two distinct tents, one within another ; the space that intervenes between their surfaces allowing a free circulation of air, and acting as a non-conductor to the heat of the sun, when it strikes violently downwards and penetrates through the upper and external fly.

Among unmarried men, in general, one tent is made to serve both for a dining-room and a bedchamber ; but families usually have several, some of which are used for sleeping-apartments, while two of the larger sort are fitted up as reception-saloons and dining-rooms. These, when tastefully furnished with lustres, lamps, tables, carpets, and couches, have a species of elegance that is truly eastern ; but the cloth roofs and walls, particularly at night, look comfortless and insecure ; and, upon the whole, I am inclined to think, that a tent, however well fur-

nished and complete it may be, is not a desirable place of abode in any climate.

The Bombay esplanade, on which I had taken up my residence, is a large expanse of level ground, stretching along the sea-beach nearly a mile. A considerable portion of it is reserved for the accommodation of the native troops stationed at Bombay ; but a large space is likewise set apart for any strangers or civilians who may choose to encamp upon it. During six months of the year the esplanade is covered with tents, many of which are occupied by people visiting the presidency, and many by persons who have houses in Bombay, but who, in the dry season, are glad to exchange the heat, dust, and confinement of the town, for the beauty, coolness, and open prospects of the sea-shore. The tents vary much in shape and in size, and are pitched in a style of irregularity that is rather unpleasing to the eye ; and the bad effect of which is not redeemed by any external elegance in their structure, or any variety in the materials of which they are composed.

The esplanade is a favourite place of evening resort, both with Europeans and natives. The former usually assemble on horseback, or in carriages, every afternoon after sunset, and ride backwards and forwards, enjoying the sea-breeze, and exchanging salutations with their acquaintances. I joined the throng the first day I arrived in Bombay; but found that the scene, so far from being a brilliant, or even a ~~say~~ one, presented none of that imposing splendour which I had expected to find in the equi-pages and company assembled in the Hyde Park of one of the seats of government of the East. Newly-arrived cadets formed a large proportion of the equestrainians. Large shoals of them, dressed in their new uniforms, and mounted on sorry Arabs, issued from the tents and barracks at sunset, and cantered about, ran races, and tried to "witch the world with noble horsemanship." The civilians were next in number; but they appeared in the more sober livery of blue or white, and rode more cautiously than the young soldiers. Sometimes an

officer of the staff, known at once by his military hat and feathers, might be seen galloping along ; and, at other times, a female equestrian, surrounded by gentlemen, would cross the most public part of the esplanade, and lend a transient *eclat* to the monotonous groups in her vicinity. The four-wheeled carriages were neither numerous nor elegant ; in general, they were drawn by Arab horses, with long bushy tails, which, as every one knows, look most awkward upon a horse when in harness ; and the native drivers managed their reins so clumsily, that the defects of the animals and equipages under their control became doubly apparent.

Sometimes a military band performs upon the esplanade. This proves a great attraction, and draws all the carriages and horsemen to one spot, where may be enjoyed a *coup d'œil* of the best society in Bombay. A great number of natives usually seat themselves on the ground within hearing of the music, though, it appears, that curiosity, not the love of harmonious sounds, induces them to collect together in this manner.

But, nevertheless, they seem better satisfied with the concert than the European auditors, on whose countenances no expression of pleasure is ever to be detected. One of the things, indeed, that first attracts the attention of a stranger on arriving in the East, is the look of ennui, languor, and apathy, that is imprinted on almost every face. In the morning, a man seems depressed at the thoughts of having a long day to pass, and at night he appears exhausted by the fatigue of passing it. The evening-drive on the esplanade affords no positive pleasure to those who daily have recourse to it; but it serves to kill an hour,—brings together friends or acquaintances, (which in India mean the same thing,) and if, as is often the case, the parties have so little to talk of that they can hardly exchange words, they, at least, enjoy the satisfaction of being able to exchange yawns. I had entered Bombay with the impression that it was the seat of wealth, splendour, fashion, and extravagance; but a stroll upon its esplanade removed the delusion. I believe there are few English water-

ing-places of the third class that could not produce a better evening turn-out than this Scotch factory. Every thing had an appearance of dinginess, age, and economy, that seemed miserably out of place beneath the ardent clime and radiant skies of Asia.

I have already mentioned how beautiful the moonlight was the evening preceding our arrival in Bombay. However, I thought it appeared much finer on shore, and likewise of a peculiar kind, such as I had never before seen, combining a mellowness and a brilliancy that are seldom found united. Moonlight, in northern regions, is clear, cold, white, and dazzling, and gives to objects a hardness and a definiteness of outline, such as they rarely have even in bright sunshine. In the West Indies, again, the lunar radiance is warm, fiery, and glowing ; and scenery under its influence appears hazy, indistinct, and of enlarged magnitude. The autumnal moonlight of Britain exhibits something of both the characteristics above described ; but has a feebleness and wateriness, which, in a great measure, neu-

tralize the effects of the combination. But in the Bombay moonlight, at the time I speak of, softness and brightness were so intimately and harmoniously blended, that it seemed more extensive than any I had ever before had an opportunity of observing.

My tent stood within a few yards of the beach, and the prospect from it, on the night of my arrival, was very fine. Before me was an expanse of smooth sea, extending to the horizon, and specked with small vessels, called *Pattemar* boats. The wind near the shore was too faint to impel forward those under its influence, and they floated idly in the moonlight ; but several of the more distant ones moved rapidly along, and others could be discovered beyond them, but so imperfectly, that they more resembled exhalations resting on the face of the ocean, than vessels carrying human beings. On my right the coast of the island had a graceful sweep several miles in length, and terminating in a rocky point, which projected a considerable way into the sea. On the extent of beach intervening

between its extremity and my tent the little waves broke with faint murmurs, and sparkled in the moonlight. Behind me lay the esplanade, white with innumerable tents, in some of which the faint twinkling of a lamp was discoverable when the doors were moved backwards and forwards by the wind. Towards my left, the town of Bombay and its fortifications, forming a black mass of building, stood as noiseless as if they had been uninhabited, and closed the prospect. Not a person nor an animal was stirring any where ; and the heavy breathing of my servants, overcome with sleep, was the only sound that indicated vicinity to a human being.

In the morning, the first objects that attract the attention of a stranger residing in the esplanade, are crowds of Parsees standing by the edge of the sea, and praying aloud with uplifted hands. The murmur of their voices is powerful and constant, and has a singular effect when heard amidst the dashing of the waves. The devotees are most numerous during sunrise, when they line nearly the whole of the beach

that skirts the esplanade, and from their dress, attitudes, and occupation, form a very impressive spectacle. They stand with their faces directed towards the sun, and never for a moment turn from it till they have finished their religious duties, the performance of which usually occupies about a quarter of an hour.

Many European gentlemen may at the same time be seen taking a morning ride along the beach. This, in Bombay, is called a "constitutional;" and is considered so necessary to the health, that even those who dislike early rising and exercise on horseback, are in the habit of daily getting up at dawn, and galloping several miles before breakfast. Nothing can be more melancholy than the appearance of the latter sort of equestrians. One can easily see that they would gladly exchange the saddle for a mattress, and that they feel at a loss whether to run the risk of disjointing themselves by galloping fast, and getting over the allotted number of miles as soon as possible, or to limit their pace to a slow trot, and make the gentleness of the

motion console them for the increased duration of their ride. Such men, after taking a “constitutional,” think that, at breakfast and tiffin, they may safely eat as much and as many things as they please; but were they to practise temperance all day, they would find that they might sleep all the morning without any serious injury to health.

The sight of these “constitutionalists” is rather depressing to a stranger just arrived in Bombay. He has probably, during the greater part of the preceding night, been tortured into a fever by musquitos, and half suffocated with the closeness of the atmosphere. He gets up exceedingly fatigued by his efforts at repose, and goes to the door of his tent, expecting to inhale a cool and refreshing-sea breeze; but he finds a perfect calm, and sees a volume of dense and lazy mist extending along the beach, and totally concealing the expanse of ocean behind it. At intervals the spectral forms of the constitutionalists glimmer dimly through the vapour, and are soon again lost in its obscurity. Their grey

Arab horses canter noiselessly upon the loose sand, and appear almost as melancholy and dispirited as their riders, who look as if they were on a journey to the other world: The new-imported and florid European, on first seeing them, naturally forms the conclusion, that a few years residence in India will reduce him to what they are, and feels inclined to exclaim, in the words of Hamlet,—“ To this complexion must I come at last !” and to wish himself on board ship again, and in full sail towards England.

A few mornings after my arrival, I seated myself at the door of my tent, which stood in a very public part of the esplanade, and observed what was going on around me. No Europeans were visible, but a great number of Parsee and mussulmen servants were hurrying about with dishes, tea-equipages, &c., it being about the usual hour of breakfast. Palanquin-bearers and native grooms lay at the door of almost every tent awaiting the commands of its inmates. Here and there Arab horses stood unsheltered in the sun, and sometimes a gig or a palanquin

could be seen shooting rapidly along from one part of the encampment to another. Water-carriers with their oxen were abroad in great numbers, and likewise women retailing buffaloes' milk in polished brass pitchers. A little way off was a public fountain, where a vast multitude of natives, both male and female, were supplying themselves with water, scouring their copper jars, washing their children, quarrelling and singing, and talking so loud as to drown all other noises. A little way from me some people were pitching a handsome tent, probably for the reception of a stranger, and in another direction, they were striking one, whose owner seemed on the eve of commencing a journey; for six or seven ponies laden with trunks stood near the spot, and a party of servants were packing up a variety of articles. Besides the people that were actually employed in the different ways above described, I observed many others walking along or seated on the ground, apparently inattentive to the busy scene, and quite unconnected with any of its details; so that

every part of the esplanade was enlivened by objects pregnant with novelty and interest to a stranger.

I had not been long seated, when an old man, attended by a little girl leading two goats and several kids, approached. He offered either to sell them or to bring their milk to the tent every morning. The animals, particularly the young ones, were the most beautiful of their kind I had ever seen, and I expressed a desire to purchase the smallest of the latter. "No," said he, "it must not be taken away from its parent. It could no more live without her than this child could without me." The girl smiled, and took the kid in her arms, and walked away followed by her father.

Soon afterwards a man, carrying several swords, and followed by two low-cast natives with bundles on their heads, came to the door of my tent. He proved to be a travelling merchant, and immediately displayed his goods, which consisted of silks, muslins, silver plate, old books, &c., and a great variety of trifles and

trinkets. The price upon his articles was always double what he was willing to accept ; but he doubtless had learned from experience, that Europeans, on first arriving in the country, were in general too ignorant of Indian character to suspect this. He valued his English books by the same standard that many of the reading public do, the newest works being in his opinion the best. He could decipher the dates in the title-pages, but nothing more. Having taken up an old edition of Milton, he presented it to me, saying, " This is good," and then held up another volume of recent date, called the " Cadet's Assistant," and cried, but " This is better." I purchased from him two small bottles, which, he said, contained attar of roses ; but on opening them after he had gone, I found that the liquid within was common almond oil.

I now saw a troop of native beggars advancing. They were fourteen in number, and were all blind. They walked in a line, the person at the head of it being led by a child, and having a string extending from him, to different parts

of which his companions in misery were attached. When they came in front of me, their guide twitched the cord, and they all prostrated themselves on the ground, uttering supplications and groans. Their dress and appearance were miserable in the extreme; but the little boy that conducted their steps looked gay and indifferent, and, on receiving some money, led them away as if they had been a flock of cattle.

My next visitors were two snake-charmers, who lived by exhibiting their art in public. They were attended by a goat and a monkey, both of which performed various little tricks with considerable dexterity. They carried their snakes coiled up in baskets, and having drawn them forth with much pretended caution and timidity, laid them on the ground. Their keeper then began to beat a small drum. The animals, one of which appeared to be a real cobra de capello, and the other a species of the boa, erected themselves on hearing the noise as if preparing to dart at him who made it; but he suddenly changed the music to a long whistle,

and the snakes sunk upon the ground, and continued without motion for a little time. They then crawled slowly towards him, and he proceeded to twine them around his neck and waist and arms ; but he did not affect to be seized with convulsions, as snake-charmers usually do on applying the reptiles to their bodies. The cobra had of course been deprived of its fangs ; but I could not prevail upon the people to let me look into its mouth.

A variety of other characters came to my tent in the course of the morning, among whom were an Arab disposing of rose-water, a Persian with gems for sale, and a native horse-dealer. The esplanade, from the multitude of Europeans encamped upon it, affords a fine field for merchants and pretenders of every kind, the first finding purchasers, and the others dupes among the liberal-handed and unsuspecting cadets whom British ships daily bring to Bombay.

In traversing the town of Bombay one sees nothing indicative of eastern magnificence. Its streets are narrow and unpaved, and the build-

ings are more like merchants' ware-rooms than dwelling-houses. The European parts of the city of Calcutta are said to consist of a succession of palaces, and Madras, we are told, abounds with elegant structures ; but the best streets in Bombay, I should suppose, scarcely equal the native suburbs of its sister presidencies. The houses, interiorly, are neither so spacious nor so convenient as Asiatic habitations are generally supposed to be, and though many of them are well furnished, none are fitted up with any degree of luxury or splendour.

The stranger arriving in Bombay, full of the delusions that prevail in England respecting India, will be miserably disappointed on finding the hospitality of the people as much inferior to his expectations as are their dwelling-houses and style of life, and on observing that the social intercourse that takes place among them is not characterized by that liberality of feeling, attractive elegance, and festive splendour, which appear to exist in other parts of the East, and which, in tropical climates, tend to throw a gloss

upon life there, such as charms the novice, and, for a while, prevents him from discovering its real spiritlessness and insipidity.

The only thing that a stranger in Bombay will find to coincide with his previous impressions respecting Asiatic manners, is the bodily indolence of Europeans of all classes, and the undisturbed and unanxious routine of life which they enjoy. But this is common to every part of the East, and is a necessary effect of the climate. In no part of the world have men so little to do as in India ; yet but a small proportion of that little is done by those to whom the performance of it belongs. This is one of the first things that strikes a new-comer. He sees that existence is made as easy to all ranks as human ingenuity can make it, and that no one requires to pay any attention to those economical or domestic arrangements that would necessarily occupy a considerable part of his time and attention were he at home. All little duties that create annoyance and personal fatigue devolve upon servants and dependants ; and gentlemen

of every grade, from the ensign to the general officer, seem to think and feel that the exertion of eating, sleeping, and amusing themselves, is as great a one as they can safely subject themselves to. The natives, indeed, teach this as much as the climate ; for, with the exception of the lowest casts, they are more indolent and inactive than their European masters.

The mode of life pursued in Bombay is, I believe, the same as prevails in other parts of the East. People usually get up at six in the morning, or even earlier, and take exercise of some kind, or perhaps transact business before breakfast. The forenoon is spent in visiting or in professional duties, and at one o'clock a meal called *tiffin* is put upon the table. *Tiffin* corresponds with the English luncheon, but is infinitely more abundant and substantial, consisting sometimes of soup, beef-steaks, fricasees, curries, hams, &c. and a liberal allowance of beer and wine. The partakers of this unnatural repast are in the habit of indulging in a siesta after it, or, in other words, of going to sleep for two hours,

which is a rational enough plan, the giddiness occasioned by the malt liquor they have drank often rendering them unfit for any thing else. On awakening from their afternoon's slumber, people prepare for an evening-drive upon the esplanade ; from which, after viewing the same circle of faces, the same carriages, and the same uniforms, that they have daily seen for many months past, they return soon after sunset and dress for dinner. This meal is served up about seven, and is little more than a pastime and a matter of ceremony ; for, in general, most of the dishes are sent from the table nearly untouched, the heat, the tropical languor, and the meridian tiffin, all combining to drive away appetite. Coffee and tea succeed the dinner in the course of the evening, and the party in general separates long before midnight.

The only objectionable point in this distribution of the day is the tiffin, which is at best a most uncomfortable, injurious, and unnecessary meal. It occurs when the heat is greatest, and only three or four hours after breakfast, when

people do not require to eat, and induces a habit of drinking in the forenoon, and destroys all relish and natural appetite for dinner. The evening is evidently the proper time for banqueting in the East ; for there, as in other tropical climates, a man is coolest when his stomach is empty, and the heat in the middle of the day feels oppressive enough without the addition of the feverish glow that succeeds a full meal. Perhaps few people could endure total abstinence between an early breakfast and a late dinner ; but a little wine and biscuit would form a much better kind of refreshment for them than curry, bacon-ham, and beer. However, in India the taste for tiffins would be much less general were not they found to relieve ennui and languor, by causing a break in the day, and diversifying its wearisome routine. The banqueting-table is resorted to as a place of pastime and amusement by the idle and indolent in Europe as well as in Asia ; but in the former country, perhaps, chiefly because it is the means of collecting people together and promoting conversation. In India,

however, people seldom talk much during meals, the fund of conversation being so scanty, that they are unwilling to exhaust any part of it when they have so reasonable an excuse for silence as tiffin or dinner affords.

In India, the details and appendages of a large dinner-party differ considerably from those belonging to a similar entertainment in England. All the guests, whether male or female, are attended by their own servants, whose dresses are as various as those of their masters and mistresses. Forty people seated at table have an equal number standing behind them; and a person newly arrived in the East, and a member of such a company, would perhaps derive more amusement from viewing the servants, than from the society of the individuals upon whom they were attending; for he might see men of four or five different casts and of as many different nations ministering to the wants of those of one. The punkah, which forms a part of the furniture of most dining-rooms in India, is usually kept in constant motion during dinner, when it is of

more service in driving away mosquitoes, and dispelling the fumes of the meat, than in keeping the company cool. Indeed, one very disagreeable circumstance, arising from the crowd of servants in waiting at a large party, is the increase of heat which they occasion, and which, by taking away the appetite of the guests, in a manner renders the attendance of the former useless and unnecessary. People do not usually remain long at table after dinner has been removed, and very little wine is drank, which appears surprising; for one would suppose that the dull uniformity of life in India, the want of evening amusements, and the enervating influence of the climate, would powerfully tempt men to seek relief in the bottle. After all, a large dinner-party in the East generally proves a heavy and fatiguing affair. It consists of an abundant repast, of which no one cares to partake,—of obsequious attendance, which is equally useless and inconvenient,—and of people who are too indolent to endeavour to amuse one another, and too weary to be disposed to feel amused

themselves. Tea and coffee sometimes give a degree of excitement to the spirits of the party ; which, however, is soon followed by proportional depression ; and before the arrival of that hour at which, in Europe, conversation is brightest, and people's energies are most active, every one is either half asleep, or desirous of being wholly so.

The European society in Bombay, though not divided into distinct classes, is composed of distinct circles. The members of one circle are scarcely ever to be met with in another, not because their rank or manners renders them inadmissible into any except their own, but because they belong to a particular set, and are supposed to give an exclusive preference to the society which it affords. This non-intercourse is usually encouraged by the leading persons of each circle, who, feeling jealous of each other, wish to attach their respective adherents exclusively to themselves. Some individuals indeed contrive to act the part of neutrals, and to keep up a connexion with several different sets at the

same time ; but they seldom are much esteemed, and soon discover that party-spirit is as necessary to a man's consequence in social as in political life. The rivalry which exists between the individuals who preside over the different circles is almost the only thing that disturbs the harmony, or rather torpor, of society. The men, indeed, are generally too indolent and good-natured to indulge any feelings of the kind ; but the females betray an abundant share of mutual hostility, and a jealous desire of lessening each other's influence, notoriety, and importance. A stranger, who wishes to become a member of any particular circle, and to be invited to all the parties given by its patroness, has merely to make her a visit, and to entertain her with some scandal against her rivals. This good office proves that he is attached to her interest, and he accordingly becomes a frequent guest at her table, and continues to be so as long as he acknowledges her supremacy ; but, should she suspect him of paying tribute at another shrine, she will cut

him without any ceremony, and expect her adherents to do so likewise.

On leaving the Presidency, and going into the interior of the country, I was equally astonished and pleased to find the society at out-stations much superior in refinement and liberality to that of Bombay. I everywhere met with a spirit of mutual confidence and a disposition to sociality, which do not, and indeed cannot, exist at the seat of government. Among the leading people there, the collusion of interests is too constant, and the points of rivalry are too numerous, to admit of such a state of things. Wherever there are a governor and a commander-in-chief, both rich in patronage, it may be supposed that there will be a great deal of intriguing in the society of which they form the heads. Even those who have no favours to ask for themselves, will be desirous of having the power of asking them for their friends, and of increasing their consequence by appearing to stand well with the individuals who conduct public affairs.

This feeling prevails to a great degree among the established residents of Bombay, and particularly among those who hold high situations there ; and often makes them, in their intercourse with each other, mutually infringe even the ceremonials of external courtesy. There is a disagreeable stiffness, reserve, and caution, in their manners to strangers ; and the liberal and unsophisticated spirit of society is to be found only among the officers of the regiments that happen to be stationed at the Presidency. Persons of the former description never appear to feel at ease in each other's company. They seem fearful of committing themselves, of letting out their secrets, and of affording some one the means of circumventing them.

At the out-stations in India, a man's consequence in society is not affected by his rank, or by the amount of his income ; but, in Bombay, among the leading circles, these two points are inquired into and ascertained before he is invited to dinner, or perhaps even spoken to. But, should a stranger happen to be introduced into

a society of this kind, where he is wholly unknown, its members will immediately throw a glance at his uniform, and determine from its appearance whether or not he is to be treated with any consideration. They at once discover his rank, be it field-officer, captain, or subaltern, and, after calculating the amount of his monthly pay, regulate his precedence accordingly. Staff-facings, however, sometimes cover the sins of a poor lieutenant low in the service, and even procure him a seat next his host's new-imported ugly niece or female cousin ; or a distant relationship to the governor may entitle an ensign to a place not very far from the lady of the house ; but should a subaltern have none of these grounds of distinction, he will probably have to dine off the dish that is opposite him, or be asked condescendingly by his host to join him in taking beer, after almost every person at table has declined the invitation. All this sort of thing takes place more or less in society in Europe ; but there the distinctions of birth, titles, and wealth, belong, perhaps, as it were, peculiarly

and exclusively to those who practise it, and endow them, in some degree, with a right to do so. But the ostentation, hauteur, and jealous respect of persons, that are carried to a great extent by some people in Bombay, have no foundation of the kind, and appear alike despicable and ridiculous, particularly when one considers, that those who assume them were once no higher in rank, and probably three times poorer, than are the individuals upon whom they take an opportunity of playing off their vulgar, low-lived, and ill-managed pretensions.

Bombay, upon the whole, is a very disappointing place. A man, on arriving there, will, I believe, find fewer of his Asiatic anticipations realized than he would in either of the sister Presidencies; and the simple fact of its being an island, and a very small one, excites disagreeable ideas of narrowness, isolation, confinement, and want of scope, which depress the energies of a stranger, uncertain about his fortunes, and newly exiled to a foreign land.

Were the Genius of Scandal at a loss where

to establish her head-quarters, I would recommend that their site should be Bombay, and that she should select her personal staff from the resident society of that island. The duties of her department would then be most efficiently performed ; for in no other part of the world where I have ever been is the propensity for gossiping so universal and unintermitting. The people do almost nothing but retail stories about each other. Male tattlers are nearly as common as female ones, and are more valued in society, their opportunities of obtaining private information being greater. Every attempt at intrigue, every piece of jilting, every after-dinner quarrel, and every domestic broil that takes place, is known and circulated within twenty-four hours subsequent to its occurrence. The arrival of a ship full of passengers affords a delightful *morceau* to the scandal-mongers ; and I am convinced that, were the young ladies who come out to Bombay to be told before entering its harbour to what an ordeal of criticism and scrutiny their manners, conduct, persons, connexions, and ac-

complishments, would soon be subjected, they would all throw themselves into the sea.

In England, the idea of luxury has somehow or other got so intimately connected with that of India, that in most minds they are inseparable ; and, therefore, the first thing that a stranger has in expectation on arriving there is the enjoyment of this luxury, and it is the first thing in which he is disappointed. Those only who never have visited tropical climates, believe that they can be the seat of luxury ; for the highest pitch of it that is attainable by a European in any of them is relief from absolute suffering. One week's residence in India usually serves to dispel all those delusive anticipations of a life of splendour and voluptuousness, which occupy the minds of the young men and women who embark for its shores. They find that there they cannot, without some trouble and management, ensure to themselves even the enjoyment of simple and uninterrupted personal comfort.

Those conveniences which are common to

almost every European in India, and which the heat renders almost essential to existence, are, in Britain, ranked as luxuries, because the people there, seeing that such would be superfluous in their own climate, think that they must be equally so in every other. The punkah is one of them. It is a slight frame of wood, covered with canvass or silk, and suspended from the ceiling. Two servants, by means of a string, swing it backwards and forwards during meals, and thus waft a quantity of air in the faces of the guests on opposite sides of the table alternately. The latter have, perhaps, entered the dining-hall in a state of perspiration, and consequently have a shivering-fit every time the punkah drives a blast of wind upon them, and are in a glow of heat when the machine is doing the same favour to their friends on the other side of the table. In this “sweet vicissitude and grateful change” consists the luxury of the punkah ; which I, for one, always would gladly dispense with ; for, even though it may sometimes afford a momentary and refreshing coolness, the suc-

ceeding heat feels so much more intolerable, that the transient relief one has experienced renders him doubly alive to his torments, on the same principle that an occasional glimpse of heaven is said to give additional acuteness to the sufferings of the damned.

The palanquin, which is too well known to require description, has no more claim to the name of a luxury than the punkah ; for the heat renders it one of the necessities of life in India, and it is a conveyance which would seem odious any where else. There surely is nothing delightful or voluptuous in lying full length in a close wooden box ; and I suspect that Europeans in the East would prefer travelling in an open carriage, or on horseback, to moving along at the rate of four miles an hour in a palanquin, were such exposure to the climate as safe and agreeable as it is in England.

Among the reported luxuries of the East, that of having a large retinue of attendants holds a distinguished place ; however, in Britain, one servant does as much as five can do in India ;

and, as a man's domestic comfort becomes the more precarious in proportion to the number of people upon whom it depends, it follows that he has less chance of enjoying it without interruption with a large household-establishment in the East, than with a small one at home. The servants that surround an Indian dinner-table, and give an air of luxury and grandeur to the entertainment, are so far from adding to the comfort of the guests, that they would gladly dismiss two-thirds of them, were they not aware that the remainder would, from indolence and stupidity, be incapable of performing the duties required of them.

The *cuscus tatty* is another luxury of the East. It consists of a frame of wood, interwoven with twigs, between which is distributed a layer of a particular kind of grass, that yields an agreeable fragrance when moistened with water. This apparatus being fixed in the windward door-way of an apartment, is kept constantly wet by people employed for the purpose, and the breeze, in passing through it, acquires, from

the rapid evaporation of the water, such a coolness as makes the thermometer sink sometimes twelve or fifteen degrees below the natural temperature of the atmosphere. The tatty, no doubt, affords great relief from the heat, which would otherwise be nearly insupportable; but I suspect that most people would be better pleased were the climate so cool as to render this kind of artificial refrigeration unnecessary. In England, a good fire, during chill weather, is actually a much greater luxury than tatties are in the greatest heats of India; yet people usually regard the former as one of the first necessities of life, while they sometimes mention the latter as one of the voluptuous enjoyments that are peculiar to Asia.

Those things alone which add directly to human enjoyment can properly be called luxuries, not those that merely ameliorate human suffering. Therefore, the punkah, the cucus, the mosquito-fan, the palanquin, &c. belong to the latter class, and, instead of being delightful superfluities, are actual necessities of life;

with this peculiarity, however, that the more requisite they are, the more uncomfortable must be the condition of those who employ them. When the conjoined use of the three first-mentioned Asiatic conveniences is required at a dinner-party, it is a proof that the guests are tormented with the extremes of heat ; but when the weather is cool enough to enable the latter to dispense with them, they can generally manage to take their meal in comparative comfort, and without much annoyance.

From all this it will appear, that India is not the country for social enjoyment, although its European inhabitants possess wealth, leisure, and facilities of intercourse, sufficient to make it superlatively so, could they resist or escape the benumbing and tyrannical influence of its tropical climate. The heat neither renders people inhospitable, nor prevents them from frequently meeting together ; but it is the cause of a languor and a spiritlessness in society, which are particularly evident to a stranger, and which sometimes make him feel company depressing

instead of exhilarating. This is a source of disappointment to most people on first arriving in the East, particularly if they have been taught to believe that social life there is both fascinating and brilliant. They soon find it quite the reverse; for, in addition to the stupifying influence of the unremitting heat, it is affected by the remoteness of India from Europe, which is the only quarter of the world that furnishes a sufficient supply of events, of sources of interest, and of intellectual excitements, to keep the minds of refined and civilized people in a state of activity and progression. Wherever these are wanting, as is the case in all the British colonies, society has a hateful degree of dulness and insipidity in its composition. This is not the fault of its members, but of their situation, which shuts them out from that knowledge of the march of human affairs which promotes conversation, and sometimes makes the dullest people entertaining. The European inhabitants of India receive intelligence of all the important events that take place in Britain, and of many

of the minor ones ; but both are too indistinctly reported to create interest, or to afford subjects for conversation. It is only when people are in the midst of things, that they are much affected by their complexion, or anxious about their results. But India never is the scene of any public occurrences that attract the attention of its residents ; among whom consequently there is no current fund of general interest, which they at all times can draw upon for supplies of conversation, as is the case in Britain and in most of the countries of Europe.

The stranger in India immediately perceives this deficiency of subjects of general interest, and the narrow limits within which common conversation is necessarily confined. The people of the East probably subsist on fewer ideas than any other equally polished, refined, and enlightened society whatever. They have almost nothing to talk of but their own affairs and the private concerns of each other ; and a person, on first arriving among them, finds himself totally excluded from taking any part of their con-

versation, because he has no knowledge of the people to whom they are constantly alluding. An anecdote of one individual forms an introduction to something about another, which again leads to a story of a third, and they bring forward the whole of their acquaintances in succession, and perhaps in such regular and unvarying order, that he who has heard the catalogue two or three times discussed, may, when any particular name is mentioned, form a pretty correct guess as to the one that will immediately follow. This is excessively tiresome; but one cannot reasonably complain of its being so; for he ought to consider, that conversation of some kind or other is indispensable, and that India affords no choice of subjects; and, in short, that he himself, after residing a few months in the country, will be obliged to have recourse to that personal sort of talk which at first appeared to him so uninteresting.

One may easily conceive what a dull affair a large party in India usually proves, particularly if the company do not resort to music or

cards. The want of subjects of conversation is a minor evil, compared with that exhaustion which every one feels before the evening is half spent, and which deadens all relish for pleasure or amusement of any kind. When strangers meet together, they may not even be able to converse about their acquaintances, as one party, perhaps, knows nothing of the associates of the other ; and the few subjects of general interest they may have recourse to are soon exhausted. Neither is the appearance of an Asiatic drawing-room calculated to dispose people to sociality. It may seem chimerical to say that the aspect of an apartment ever can have any effect of the kind ; but we have a proof for it, when we observe how a fire, a table with lights upon it, or a couple of couches placed directly opposite to each other, act as centres of attraction, around which individuals assemble, and are led to engage in amusements or conversation. In Indian houses, however, the large and lofty rooms, the glimmering lamps, the scattered chairs, the open doors and windows, and the darkness of night

visible through them, have an aspect of chilliness and comfortlessness, which acts as a damper upon one's spirits, already depressed by the heat, and makes him regret the want of the various little adjuncts which give a zest to social life in northern climates, and which can neither be obtained nor enjoyed in the East.

When it is considered how constantly the conversation of the people in India turns upon the affairs of one another, it may be supposed that they have a great propensity for scandal. This certainly is the case; however, much as they love domestic news, they cannot be accused of talking with malignant complacency of the faults and frailties of their acquaintances. Every thing is said in a good-natured way, and the personalities which they utter hinge chiefly upon ridiculous points in the characters, manners, and opinions, of those to whom they refer. Constant habits of observation of external behaviour, produced by the vacuity of mind, and the wearisome idleness incidental to life in the East, have endued people there with much quick-

ness of perception on subjects of this nature, and they satirize the weaknesses, foibles, and singularities, of each other with considerable humour and dexterity. This is often carried to such an extent, that, in a house where there is a constant succession of morning visitors, a running conversation of the kind will be kept up for hours together, each person, when he takes leave, affording a source of talk and merriment to those that remain, and likewise to those that enter, and continuing to engross their attention till another individual quits the company, and supplies fresh sport to its members, after they have nearly run down the game that had broke cover before him. All this sort of thing is comparatively harmless, because malignity has no part in it, and because nothing ever is said that can lower the individual under review in the estimation of others; for it may be observed, that the good-nature and forbearance with which people in India talk of the peculiarities of their acquaintances is extended to their moral frailties also. The indiscretions of both sexes are usually re-

garded with much lenity ; and when such are made the subject of conversation, they generally are treated with ridicule, but never are malignantly brought forward for the purpose of deforming and calumniating the guilty persons. A scandalous story is circulated with such rapidity, and every one expresses so much anxiety to learn the particulars of it, that a stranger would be inclined to attribute the eagerness for intelligence to a latent love of mischief and slander ; but this is not the case ; for the persons most active in propagating the tale or report, always are aware that its publicity will not injure the respectability of the individual who is implicated in it. The feelings of Europeans in India, on points of violated morality, resemble those that are current in the fashionable world in England, being only rather less fastidious. In the former country, the stigma attached to profligacy and licentiousness in either sex is so slight, that people do not hesitate to accuse one another of laxity of conduct on the most fallacious grounds ; and the utmost purity of life and

correctness of manners sometimes prove insufficient to secure a female from being suspected of errors and levities which are alike repugnant to her principles and to her inclinations.

Indeed, the disgusting licentiousness with which women of the best reputation are talked of forms the chief defilement of Indian society, and the only base and vile feature in its composition. No female, however correct and modest, is safe from this kind of profanation. A scandalous story, affecting or involving the reputation of a woman, is propagated with embellishments, and listened to with the utmost avidity, particularly by old Indians. They gloat over a recital of the kind with the epicurism of practised debauchees, and try to rival each other in the amount and rankness of the offerings which they scatter upon the altar of voluptuousness and obscenity.

Though general conversation in India, as I have already remarked, consists almost entirely of personalities, the society does not afford so much scope for them as might be expected.

One would suppose that the idleness, liberty of action, and pecuniary resources enjoyed by Europeans in the East, would, by affording every person the means of indulging his favourite propensities, elicit and bring into action a vast variety of peculiarities connected with human manners, opinions, occupations, and amusements. In India, however, the surface of society is not diversified with any thing of the kind. The enervating influence of the climate, probably in most cases, weakens the mental energies so much, that people lose all excitement to action, and become too indolent even to follow their own inclinations, except in the most common affairs of life. All those whims, caprices, and riots of fancy, which lead men into eccentricities of conduct, and produce in them peculiarities of character and manners, are rendered torpid; for the journey of life, even when performed in the smoothest way, is still so fatiguing, that the traveller feels unwilling to increase his toils by wandering into by-paths, though he should think them agreeable ones.

Nevertheless, the individuals belonging to each different grade of rank in the military service collectively exhibit some general peculiarity of character. Almost all subalterns are devoted to field-sports and horse-racing, often to the ruin of their constitutions and future prospects. Unfavourable as the climate is for these pursuits, they are entered into with a degree of enthusiasm that probably is unknown in other countries. Sporting affairs form the chief subjects of conversation among young men everywhere, and particularly at regimental messes, where the various details of the chase, of coursing, of dog-training, and of betting, are daily entered into with a minuteness that seems very tiresome to those who feel no interest in such matters. However, when one considers the boldness of spirit which hunting excites, and the fine training which its practice affords to the young soldier, he will be inclined to regard the prevailing taste for field-sports in India as a beneficial thing. Young officers, without some such stimulus to personal activity, would become too

indolent and effeminate to encounter the fatigues of a campaign, or to be at all efficient when their services were required against an enemy.

When a man attains the rank of captain, (which he seldom does in less than fifteen years from the time of his entering the service,) he usually becomes comparatively sedate and cautious. He renounces all the more violent kinds of field-sports, and is careful of endangering his health by excesses or needless exposures to the climate. He also sets about paying his debts, and perhaps thinks of eventually saving money. He improves the interior of his house, commences smoking the hookah, gives dinners, and cultivates social pleasures, and complains of his slow promotion. A disposition to indolence and to domestic comfort gradually steals upon him, and he begins to wish earnestly for a good appointment, and to exert himself in procuring one. A captain, who has served seventeen or eighteen years, perhaps affords the best specimen that can be found of the manners, opinions,

and habits of feeling, which a long residence in India generates in a European.

The officer who has arrived at his majority, or lieutenant-colonelcy, in general renounces most of his Asiatic pursuits and amusements, and directs all his thoughts towards his native country. His grand object is now to return to it, and he is continually planning how he may best and soonest accomplish this. He follows a system of retrenchment, overlooks his agent's accounts, and watches the fluctuations in the rates of exchange between India and England. An army-list, covered with pencil-marks, lies constantly on his table; and he begins to wonder how his seniors in the regiment contrive to hold out so long. At length, when exhausted by suspense and delay, and on the point of embarking for Europe, he gets a step in the service, which brings him so near having another, that he abandons all immediate intention of leaving India, and perhaps remains in the country till he dies, or becomes a general officer.

In Britain, people appear to have pretty correct ideas of the general state of Indian society ; for it exhibits much of that smoothness of manners and amenity of feeling which they suppose to be its characterizing features. A stranger in the East is struck with the freedom from restraint with which men enter into conversation and exchange the civilities of life, and with the frankness they use when talking of their own affairs. They have a mutual confidence, which dispels the reserve that in Europe infects people who are little acquainted with each other, and represses the spirit of sociality. In India, every person is equally independent if he chooses to be so ; and the place which he holds in society is not at all affected by the amount of fortune. Rank in the service forms the chief ground of distinction and consequence ; however, a man cannot rationally assume much upon a superiority of this kind, which has nothing exclusive in it, like titles or high birth, but which is common to many of his contemporaries, and equally attainable by all of his juniors who choose to wait

till promotion elevates them. In India, a man *does not require the aid of talents and industry to ensure to himself prosperity and advancement.* These are within the reach of all who discharge their duties ; and the possession of them, consequently, does not argue any intellectual superiority in him to whom they belong. This state of things, by placing every man's fortune on the same basis, and making its tenor in a great measure beyond his control, neutralizes those elements of envy and jealousy that are inherent in most minds, and renders useless all rivalry and competition in the general affairs of life. In India, no man stands in the way of another, except in so far as his promotion is concerned ; and few people are sufficiently depraved to feel evilly-disposed towards their seniors under such circumstances.

It may easily be conceived, that the inattention to pecuniary matters, which the liberal incomes and independent prospect of Europeans in India admit of, promotes a generosity of feeling on all subjects connected with money,

and likewise on others of a different nature. The economy and cautiousness of expenditure *that are requisite, even among people of some fortune in Britain, have a great effect in hardening the heart, weakening the principles of benevolence, and creating a narrowness of feeling, which goes far to affect the general tenor of their opinions.* There is nothing of this kind in India ; for there one gets his money with so little trouble, and with so much certainty, that he puts a comparatively small value upon it, unless when naturally avaricious. Many persons never see money for years together, the business of receiving their monthly incomes, and of paying their household expenses, devolving upon their clerks or dependants. Indeed, the trouble of studying domestic ways and means, were it necessary in India, would be insupportable. Life there is too fragile and unenergetic in its character to be disturbed by disquieting calculations and provident anxieties about the future. To the fatigue of living it

would not do to add that of contriving how to live.

But, favourable as the state of India society apparently is to the existence and interchange of the humane affections, selfishness forms a predominant feature in its composition,—not that paltry selfishness which shews itself in the daily affairs of life, but that general kind, which makes one shut his heart against all ties and predilections that may affect his personal comfort, his convenience, or his interest. That mildness of manner, and that suavity of behaviour, which characterize the common intercourse of men in India, are quite superficial and unmeaning. The most intimate acquaintances feel little actual regard or concern for each other. Strong friendships do not exist in either sex. People even make their partialities a matter of convenience, at least in so far as they forget and become indifferent to those they most loved, when they happen to be removed from them. In no part of the world is a man sooner consigned to obli-

vion after he is dead than in India ; and no where do people take leave of their most intimate associates with more calmness and carelessness. This state of feeling ought not to be condemned. Though bad and objectionable in the abstract, it is well adapted to the condition and circumstances of Europeans in the East. There, a man has a thousand powerful reasons to deter him from forming ties of any kind, or entangling his feelings in any way, that may eventually affect his happiness. He never can be sure of remaining in one place for any considerable length of time ; and his friendships, if he has formed any, are thus liable to be broken in upon in the most sudden manner. He perhaps changes his associates and acquaintances every year or two ; for death is constantly at work among them, and they are as much exposed to removal to distant spots as he is himself. It is therefore his interest to avoid all strong and permanent attachments to persons, to places, and to things, and to have his feelings and affections as portable as his camp-equipage. If, in pursuing this plan,

he circumscribes his means of enjoyment, he also diminishes the number of his regrets, and qualifies himself for living contentedly in a country where his happiness is the more secure the less it is connected with the external circumstances in which he chances to be placed.

The influence of climate is not the only thing that affects the character of social intercourse in the East, and renders it dull and uninteresting. The generality of the people themselves are defective in many of those qualities that are essential to the composition of good society. India is not the country for acquiring a knowledge of life and manners, or indeed of almost any thing else that is worth knowing; and the attainments of most of those that come to it are, as may well be conceived, of a very slender description. The cadet, who enters the Company's army at the age of fourteen, cannot be supposed to be acquainted with any thing beyond the common and fundamental branches of education. He probably never has been ten miles from his father's house, nor has read any

book except *Robinson Crusoe*: with such qualifications he embarks for India, rises in the service, and perhaps becomes a leading member in society. Can much knowledge, taste, or general information, be expected to be current in a circle of this kind ? It may be said that the young cadet will supply the deficiencies of his original education after arriving in the East ; but this cannot be admitted. He will very seldom have the inclination, and still seldomer the means of doing so. The aversion to intellectual pursuits, produced by the enervating influence of the climate, the general neglect and disesteem with which they are treated, and the contagious indolence and idleness of his companions, will extinguish all desire for mental improvement and superiority. On the other hand, should he feel anxious to attain these, it will probably be out of his power. Stationed, perhaps, in a remote part of the country, shut out from society, destitute of books, and irresolute, from acquired habits of inattention, his studious propensities will soon desert him beyond recall, and he will eventually

adopt the same mode of life and style of amusements that are followed by his young brother officers.

He alone who has lived in India, and has observed the tenor of existence usual among Europeans there, can conceive how essential intellectual pursuits of some kind or other must be to their happiness. The country furnishes no resources that are capable of yielding constant avocation and amusement to persons who have so much leisure on their hands as those in the Company's service ; and he who possesses no fund of recreation within himself, must make life a scene of frivolity or of absolute idleness. One of these two extremes is adopted by many men ; some devote themselves entirely to hunting and shooting, and to rearing dogs and horses ; others to dressing themselves and intriguing ; a third class to eating, drinking, and smoking ; and no inconsiderable number to drowsy inaction and prolonged sleep.

Nothing can be more ill-judged, than the prevalent practice of sending boys to India be-

fore they have completed their education. It is generally thought to be very desirable that cadets should enter the service at an early age ; and they are consequently hurried from home before they have had time to acquire any of those habits, tastes, propensities, and resources, that would enable them to furnish themselves with means of enjoyment in all circumstances and situations, and to render their exile supportable and even agreeable. He who has the prospect of residing twenty years in India, ought to be qualified for this long banishment by much previous mental preparation. It is a general opinion, that those persons who are destined for the East require nothing of the kind ; and, in a certain sense, it is a correct one ; for a man may indeed keep alive, discharge his duties, make money, and rise in the service, without any extraordinary attainments ; but he will not be capable of putting to flight weariness, discontent, and ennui. It will not be in his power to render life interesting and pregnant with pleasure, in situations that neither

afford him society nor any other external sources of enjoyment. If, under such circumstances, his own mind cannot answer the demands which he must make upon it, his condition will be a miserable one. This is daily exemplified at out-posts in India ; the officers who occupy them being sometimes entirely shut out from the civilized world, and quite debarred from participating even in its most communicable advantages. Constant and active occupation itself would hardly secure a man so situated from the inroads of ennui ; and it is easy to conceive how intolerable the abundant leisure that belongs to all the members of the Indian army would be to him, had he no favourite pursuit or avocation to which he could apply himself. The idle man is miserable in England, but still more so in India. In the former country, however secluded he may be, he always can indulge in locomotion, and substitute activity of body for the exercises of the mind ; but the climate of the East will not admit of this kind of pastime ; and every European there, who studies health and

personal comfort, must reconcile himself to seven or eight hours of daily confinement within doors. Should he have no domestic avocations or pursuits to fill up this long space of time, or no society to supply him with ideas, he will be apt to wish for a fate similar to that of the Seven Sleepers.

These considerations will shew the bad policy of sending young men to India before they have acquired those habits and qualifications which are essential to happiness in that country. Their education should be as complete and comprehensive as possible, instead of being limited to the most common and necessary branches. This plan of course would prevent them from entering the service at so early an age as they do at present ; but the advantage arising from the delay would liberally compensate for the attendant sacrifice of a few years. The cadet destined for the East has comparatively little chance of living to revisit his native country ; but, even supposing he had a certainty of surviving his long period of service, it would

be of little importance to him whether his definitive return home took place when his age was forty-five or fifty ; while the constant pleasure and satisfaction which he would derive from his mental accomplishments, during his sojourn in the East, would prove of incalculable value to him, and make him regard as any thing but lost the time he had spent in acquiring them.

To those who never have been in the East, it may be difficult to conceive how the residents at small out-posts contrive to pass their time. In large cantonments people usually spend the morning in paying and receiving visits, the afternoon in taking tiffin and sleeping, and the evening in attending parties ; but where there is no society, this style of life of course cannot be adopted. Even the tiffin and succeeding slumber are then discarded, early dinners rendering the one unnecessary and the other inconvenient ; and people live almost entirely in the English style, with the exclusion, however, of suppers and late hours. In India, the recreations which

can be pursued out of doors are very limited in number. Riding and walking cannot be attempted with comfort except before sunrise and after sunset ; but during the first period one feels more inclined to sleep than to take exercise ; and when the latter arrives, he is too much fatigued to enjoy locomotion of any kind. Bodily exercise, when pursued for its own sake, being in a manner forced, is usually abridged as much as seems consistent with a due regard to health, and occupies a very small portion of any individual's time. In the morning, it is succeeded by the labours of the toilet, which are commonly prolonged till breakfast is nearly ready. This meal is always a substantial one, consisting, in addition to its usual requisites, of fish, eggs, ham, fruit, &c. On its being ended, the company rise from table, and begin to occupy themselves as they severally incline, or continue conversing for some time. Any trifle serves to engage and amuse the mind in India. It would appear that the debilitating influence of the heat is exerted upon the

faculties as well as upon the body, and that the range of the former is narrowed in proportion to the limitation which takes place in the activity of the latter. One day's observation of a party of Europeans in the East would serve to illustrate this, and to shew what a degree of fatigue attends even the exertion of amusing one's self there.

About noon people usually abandon their respective employments from mere exhaustion, and saunter about the room, or stretch themselves on couches, till the approach of the dinner hour hurries them to their toilets ; from which they return in a state of comparative renovation and vivacity. This is increased by the meal, and by the agreeable stimulus of a moderate quantity of wine, and they continue on tolerably good terms with themselves and with one another till they get up from table. An attack of languor is then liable to supervene. This, however, is partly dissipated by the evening ride, and by the tea which follows it ; and, provided the weather is cool, and the party not

large, time passes rather pleasantly till about nine o'clock, when it becomes necessary to take another exhilarant in the form of brandy and water, which in some degree supports the spirits till the usual hour of repose arrives. It might naturally be supposed that the prospect of going to bed, after a day of languor, would be an agreeable one,—but far from it. The couch seldom affords refreshing and undisturbed repose. Sleep is frightened away and interrupted by a thousand different causes. The heat perhaps is oppressive, and produces restlessness and fever ; flights of mosquitoes annoy by their stinging and by their ceaseless hum ; the bat wheels in circles around the head, and threatens to alight upon it ; jackalls howl within a few yards of the bedchamber, or the ear is tortured by the discordancy of Asiatic music, and serenaded by the barking of innumerable Paria dogs ; and the morning finds the person who has been exposed to all these miseries unvisited by slumber, and more exhausted than he was the preceding night when he first lay down.

It will appear, from this sketch of a day's existence in the East, that life there, in most instances, consists chiefly of a succession of struggles against personal inconveniences and bodily uneasiness, and that those energies, which people in temperate climates employ in augmenting their sources of positive enjoyment, are expended in diminishing the causes of positive suffering. The means which in India are adopted to alleviate the heat are of comparatively little avail. They affect the imaginations of those for whose benefit they are resorted to more than they do the thermometers that hang in their houses. The influence of the climate can be successfully resisted only by withdrawing the attention from it. When the mind is idle the body is delicate. Constant employment renders one almost insensible to the heat, and invigorates the frame infinitely more than the combined operation of fans, punkahs, and tatties, even can do. But this plan cannot be pursued without considerable exertion; for that overwhelming languor and indolence, which seem to

be interwoven with existence in the East, and which prove hostile to any sort of activity, however agreeable in itself, must first be overcome and put to flight. Repeated efforts will not fail to effect this ; and when a man has once got into regular habits of employment, he will suffer comparatively little exhaustion from the heat, and will enjoy much better health and spirits than he would otherwise do. This is the only system that can render life tolerable in India ; and one must adopt it in the early part of his career there, otherwise it will become impracticable. He, who passively yields up soul and body to the enervating dominion of the climate, will gradually acquire a torpidity of mind, such as will render him incapable of any higher enjoyment than what arises from exemption from actual suffering.

It might naturally be supposed that the indolence and idleness prevalent among Europeans in India, and the scantiness of their means of amusement, would dispose them to indulge in the lower kinds of dissipation, such as gam-

ing and intemperance in wine. Both, however, are comparatively very rare, though there is no country in which such excesses would be more excusable. A propensity for high play is common to the inhabitants of almost all hot climates; and that it so seldom shews itself in India is indicative of the good taste and intellectual resources of their white population. Indeed, the correct conduct of the Indian army is becoming more conspicuous every year; and when one considers the temptations to excesses of every kind with which the military life abounds, and the facilities of committing them which the country affords, it seems astonishing that Europeans in the East should keep at all within the pales of moderation, temperance, and propriety, or resist the misleading influence of idleness, wealth, high living, and an inflaming climate.

Those three powerful causes of restraint, which, in Europe, influence the tenor of most people's lives, are unfelt and unknown in Indian society. There, moral feeling, a desire for the

good opinion of the world, and for the esteem and respect of the female sex, do not, in general, collectively or individually, deter men from outraging propriety, or committing reprehensible actions. In most instances, correct conduct is the result of good feeling and honourable propensities, not of conformity to any set of regulating principles, or of any sense of duty or of future responsibility.

Religion and its external observances are as much neglected in India as in other tropical climates. Military men, during the early part of their career in the East, are usually posted in remote parts of the country, where moral considerations are never presented to their minds under any form or by any accident. They consequently seldom think about religion, and are inclined to be very sceptical when they do. Deliberate infidelity, however, I believe to be uncommon in India. To use an expression of Dr Johnson's, "the people are infidels, as dogs are infidels, that is to say, they have never thought upon the subject."

A desire for the good opinion of the world operates much less strongly upon men's conduct in India than in Britain, their prosperity and advancement not being affected by the estimation in which they are held by the society in which they live, and the members of that society viewing with lenity and indifference those excesses which, in other countries, would injure the reputation and respectability of the persons who committed them.

In the middle and well-principled classes of society in England, the fear of forfeiting the respect and good opinion of the female sex often deters men from violating decorum and the established rules of morality, when they would otherwise do so without hesitation. In India, however, this restraining principle is very limited in its influence. There a vast majority of the Europeans are stationed at places where they scarcely ever see a white woman ; and when they happen to have an opportunity of enjoying female society, it usually is that of married ladies, whose good graces, even in Eng-

land, are prized and cultivated by the generality of young men, only in so far as the possession of them may be the means of facilitating their intercourse with the youthful and unwedded part of the sex, and of rendering themselves respectable in the eyes of the latter. But the fact is, that in India even single women lose much of that scrupulousness of feeling that prevails among the sex at home, and endeavour to shut their eyes to the dissipations of their male acquaintances, or at least do not regard them with such dislike or indignation as to refuse to countenance or associate with guilty persons.

In no part of the world, I believe, are women objects of such unremitting attention as in India. Whether married or single, they receive constant homage from men of all ranks. Ostensibly they are of much greater consequence in society than in Britain ; but actually they are of much less, at least in so far as regards the influence they exert upon the characters, conduct, and opinions of the male sex. In the East, women are courted and caressed, partly because

they are scarce, and partly because their society is agreeable and interesting ; but they excite none of that enthusiastic passion, and devout and pure admiration, which give them a presiding power over the destinies of the opposite sex, and lend a dignity and consequence to the part they perform in the various duties and relations of domestic life. In India, women are admired and valued more for the sake of their persons than on account of the fascinating influences which belong to their characters, manners, affections, and accomplishments, when such interweave themselves with the daily routine of a man's existence.

That this is the case is the fault of the male sex ; the circumstances of whose juvenile life always are unfavourable to their acquiring refined and exalted ideas of female worth and purity. It is the passion of love alone, as felt at an early age, that awakens the mind to all the finer influences of female character, and leaves impressions, recollections, and associations, which ever afterwards continue to sublimate a man's ideas

of women, and to invest the sex with attractions which are not perceptible to those who have never experienced the ardours of a youthful attachment. In Britain, almost every young man has at one time or other known something of the kind ; and from this partly arises that respectful, pure, and delicate regard, in which the female character is almost universally held there. But the cadet has no opportunity of acquiring a sentiment of this nature ; for he embarks for India when a boy, and is transferred to a country where he is totally excluded from female society, and where the degraded condition of the native women, and the intercourse he sees others keep up with them, combine to corrupt his principles, and to make his opinions of the sex those of a stupid profligate and of a hardened sensualist.

In India, very little social intercourse takes place between the younger part of the sexes, even in situations that are favourable for it. The object, which most of the females who come to the country have in view, is that of

marrying well, and of securing a good establishment. These, as they soon perceive, they cannot obtain by connecting themselves with persons who are young in the service, and consequently they neither encourage the attentions of such nor feel any pleasure in their company. A subaltern is an object of total indifference to a woman, unless he has a large income, which very seldom is the case. However, should he happen to feel and betray any partiality for an individual of the kind, her friends or guardians will take care to prevent her from carrying the degrading propensity to any length, and to promote the advances and throw her in the way of men of suitable rank and fortune. Those little gallantries and romantic partialities, that are so common among young people in Britain, are totally unknown in India. No man, who has less than forty pounds a month, is thought entitled to offer particular attentions to an unmarried female, because he is not what is termed “an eligible,” or, in other words, because he would not form an advantageous match. All

this tends to make European female society indifferent, or even disagreeable, to young men in the East. They will not submit to be neglected and looked down upon by women, who perhaps are their inferiors in birth, education, and manners, and take their revenge by talking and thinking slightly of their female acquaintances, however little they may merit such treatment.

The sketches which I have given of the state of society in the East, will perhaps convey unfavourable impressions of the country; and it will therefore be proper to say, that, though India has a dark side, it also has a fair one. Who could endure to live in it were not this the case? The man who embarks for its shores throws himself in the way of encountering many inconveniences to which he would be a stranger were he to remain in his native land, and also makes some sacrifices for which he will scarcely find a compensation; but he at once escapes from the struggles with fortune, the uncertain success, and the continual labour, that would, in

all probability, attend his career in any line of life at home, and secures to himself an independence, which grows more abundant and more easily acquired as his age advances. Those who enter the military branch of the Company's service, do not indeed receive a great deal of pay at first ; but it is quite sufficient to support them in comfort and respectability, and in a style suitable to their rank in the army, provided they neither gamble nor engage in horse-racing, nor get in debt at the commencement of their career. No man in India need give himself the least anxiety about the future, in so far as regards the means of subsistence. Even supposing he makes a practice of spending every shilling he receives, he has only to remain in the country till his period of service entitles him to a pension sufficient for his comfortable support at home. His style of life is the most easy and gentleman-like in the world, if he chooses to make it so. He enjoys every requisite for engaging in his favourite pursuits and avocations, as far as leisure and pecuniary re-

sources go ; and, when within the reach of society, may either select a set of companions, or associate with the whole circle, or live in comparative solitude and seclusion, as happens to be most agreeable to his taste. All his domestic arrangements may be formed on a liberal plan ; he may be as hospitable as he pleases, and may have servants, horses, carriages, and other conveniences, at command. It is true that, in the midst of all this, he may be carried off by an attack of cholera—driven mad by a stroke of the sun—rendered hypochondriac by a diseased liver, or forced to quit the service by confirmed bad health ; but were he in his native country he might be killed by typhus fever, thrown into a jail on account of debt, instead of a lunatic asylum, made miserable by pecuniary embarrassments, or obliged, by ill success, to abandon one line of life and to adopt another. Dr Johnson has made the following remark :—“ A man had better have ten thousand pounds at the end of ten years passed in England, than twenty thou-

sand pounds at the end of ten years passed in India ; because you must compute what you *give* for money ; and a man who has lived ten years in India has given up ten years of social comfort, and all those advantages which arise from living in England." This would be as just an estimate of the thing as possible, were a man certain of having ten thousand pounds after ten years of active employment at home, and of enjoying a liberal income during that period. "Ten years of the social comfort and of all those advantages which arise from living in England," are worth more than ten thousand pounds to him who has the means and opportunity of enjoying them. And no one who possessed these means, or had a sure prospect of possessing them, would embark for India. But if he is without either, he sacrifices little in quitting his native country. Its social comfort and peculiar advantages are not common to all that reside in it, but must be purchased and paid for at a very high rate ; and the man who

is unable to do this, can no more participate in them than he could do were he in Kamtschatka or Arabia Deserta.

It is supposed in England, that the climate is the chief source of a European's sufferings in India; but quite incorrectly. I believe that the generality of people who come to Asia find the heat much less intense and annoying than they expected, and that a few years' residence in the country makes them almost callous to its influence. It is not uncommon to hear Indians assert, that the climate they are living in is much superior to that of Britain, and that their greatest objection to returning home is the coldness and variableness of the seasons there. In India, all the inconveniences arising from extreme warmth are counteracted as much as possible, and people scarcely ever find it necessary to expose themselves to the sun. The general unhealthiness of our Asiatic possessions has likewise been greatly exaggerated; and if one considers how constantly their European inhabitants lay themselves open to causes of disease, it

will appear astonishing that the mortality amongst them is not greater. Whenever a man dies in India, people conceive that he has fallen a victim to the climate, though the cause of his death may have been one that is common to all countries.

Notwithstanding all the miseries incidental to life in India, the Europeans there are a cheerful, sociable, and, I believe, upon the whole, a tolerably happy people. They lead an easy, indolent, careless, and imaginative life ; and, if they have not very abundant and exalted means of enjoyment in their power, they, in compensation, meet with comparatively few crosses and vexations. Almost none of them are quite satisfied, neither are almost any absolutely discontented ; and even those who dislike India at first, seldom fail to become reconciled to it, or at least to get resigned to their exile, before they have served many years in the country.

It will be observed, that, in the above enumerations of the advantages belonging to life in India, I have not included that of acquiring

a fortune, which is the one that is most dazzling to people in England, and most frequently dwelt upon by them. There, many persons suppose that a man who goes to the East must get rich as a matter of course. This is a complete delusion. At present, very few Indians succeed in accumulating any wealth ; and, even formerly, when the service afforded many more facilities of the kind than it does now, the number of officers who returned home rich was trifling, compared with the multitudes that were detained in the country by the want of resources, or quitted it with nothing but their pensions. Under the present system, there are no by-ways of making money, at least none that can be honestly pursued. An officer's military pay and allowances form his whole income, of which he cannot, in general, save much, if he lives in a style suitable to his rank and to the situation that he holds. People do still, sometimes, acquire immense fortunes in India ; but then they are to be suspected of peculation and mal-practices, and would, in general, I suspect, feel rather

puzzled were they requested to explain how they accumulated their wealth. I am willing to acknowledge, however, that neither the number nor the amount of the fortunes now made, is equal to what it might be, were people to husband their means and study economy; but no person of liberal ideas can patiently submit to such a plan in India, where life, to be at all comfortable, requires the aid of many expensive accompaniments and conveniences. The duration of a man's existence is likewise so uncertain, that he feels inclined to enjoy himself while he can. If young in the service, he is little disposed to circumscribe his pleasures that he may save money, which is to lay useless and unemployed till the doubtful period arrives when he is to have the means of returning to his native country.

A stranger in the East would suppose, from the conversation of its European residents, that the hope of revisiting home supported their spirits more than any thing else, and formed a subject of constant and delightful anticipation; but,

notwithstanding a great deal of talk, their feelings upon this point are neither vivid nor strong. One daily hears old Indians speak of their homes, and of the pleasurable associations that belong to the idea of them ; but it is easy to perceive that those remembrances are exceedingly faint, confused, and incorrect. What can a person, who has left his native country at the age of fourteen, recollect about it that is worth recollecting ? All his impressions must refer to boyish habits and boyish enjoyments, both of which he knows will be quite unsuitable to his taste and advanced years when he returns to the scenes of his early life.

Most of the old Indians who go home are, I believe, disappointed. The cause of this lies in themselves, not in the country which they revisit. They have no definite idea of what they ought to expect, but anticipate innumerable pleasures and a constant succession of amusements, without knowing from what sources they are to be derived. They soon become tired of the novelties and frivolities that at first serve to occupy

their attention. In conversing with Indians, who were on a visit to their native country, or who had returned to the East after making one, I have usually found that their chief sources of interest and gratification had been derived from the trashy pageantry of the theatres, street-riots in London, bull-fights, and pugilism, caricature-shops, coffee-houses, and the more obvious peculiarities of British manners and modes of life. Such things, in general, afford a very temporary and superficial kind of attraction, which, when it wears off, leaves the person, once under its influence, destitute of amusement, and out of humour with himself.

Old Indians, who have not taken advantage of their furlough after ten years service, feel quite out of their element on first arriving in England. The customs of the country are as strange and new to them as were those of the East the day they landed on its shores. This circumstance does not make them awkward and abashed, most of them having too much of the gentlemen in their address for that ; but they get

fractious and impatient, and scorn to be taught those things of which it is no disgrace to them to be ignorant. They usually carry an air of uncomfort and dissatisfaction about them ; and are often silent and reserved in company, not from pride or diffidence, but from the want of something to say. An old Indian, just returned home, is a person who presents nothing enviable in his circumstances, except his wealth, should he happen to have any ; and this often proves inadequate to his purposes. For he, perhaps, finds that he cannot afford to live in the style that he proposed to do, and he bears a retrenchment of his comforts with a very bad grace. People returning from the East make great mistakes about the value of money in England, and about the expenses that attend living there. They go home, as they suppose, with the means of supporting an elegant establishment, and of purchasing every comfort and convenience ; but find, to their disappointment, that their incomes hardly suffice to procure what they have been accustomed to consider the neces-

saries of life. The study and practice of domestic economy becomes intolerable to them after having neglected both for years ; and they, perhaps, are glad to return to the East, and to resume the enjoyment of Asiatic indolence and independence. The number of Indians who feel disgusted with their native country is greater than is generally supposed ; for they are ashamed to confess their dislike to it. Some complain of the badness of the climate ; others of the avarice and illiberality of the people ; a third set of the taxes and game-laws ; and the dissatisfaction of a fourth party arises from their having found themselves of less consequence when at home than they had expected to be.

Perhaps it is not generally known in England, that British India consists of three great divisions, which are named Bengal, Madras, and Bombay. Throughout all these, the climate, the customs, and the mode of life followed by Europeans, have a general similarity ; but still the three armies belonging to the three countries differ greatly in their respective characters.

Bengal is the richest and most extensive division of India; and the Company's servants there are much better paid than in Madras or Bombay. On this ground, they arrogate to themselves a personal and a military superiority which does not exist, and which the officers of the sister Presidencies very properly refuse to acknowledge. The distinguishing qualities which the Bengalees actually possess are indolence and luxury; and these arise from their having less to do, and more to spend, than their neighbours. They cultivate a degrading degree of laziness, under the idea that it is dandyism and refinement. They must have servants to assist them in the most trifling offices, and seem to think that there is a virtue and a dignity in giving as much trouble as possible. Nevertheless, they are almost all gentlemen in manners, ideas, and appearance, and have a high-cast military air about them, which does not belong to the generality of the officers of the sister Presidencies. Their social qualities are of the first description, and acquire additional lustre from the knowledge of the world and exten-

sive information that often accompany them ; and *no man can have a little intercourse with the Bengalees without wishing to have a great deal more.*

They have one distinguishing characteristic, which is notorious even in Britain. I mean their love of exaggeration and rhodomontade. It may seem unaccountable, that this propensity should exist among the European inhabitants of one part of India only ; but such is the case ; for comparatively little of it can be detected in Bombay or Madras. The fact, however, I think, admits of easy explanation. Were the officers belonging to the two last-mentioned establishments to be as well paid, and to live in as great luxury as those of Bengal, their imaginations would become equally vivid and licentious. They would perform as extraordinary feats in hunting, see as many strange animals, and meet with as many wonderful adventures, as their voluptuous neighbours, who, in point of achievements, may be regarded as the knights-errant of modern times. None but the rich, the idle, and

the pampered, ever are addicted to conversational embellishments, or to passing off the extravagant fictions of their own imaginations for the daily realities of common life. Whenever the Honourable East India Directors wish to have three gasconading armies instead of one, they have only to issue orders, that their servants in Bombay and Madras shall be as well paid as those in Bengal.

The Madras and Bengal officers have not a single trait of character in common. They are so unlike each other, that a person, who had seen very little of either party, could easily distinguish them under almost any circumstances. The Madras people are indifferent to the luxuries of the table, to elegant conveniences, and sometimes even to personal comfort. They neither are indolent nor effeminate; and have so little dandyism among them, that they often neglect their dress, and look rather unmilitary. In elegance of manners, they are thought to be inferior to the Bengal and Bombay officers; and they patronise some unpleasant customs that

are unknown in the neighbouring Presidencies. They are said to love money more than other Indians do ; but this assertion seems to be ill-founded, most of them being very poor, and very much in debt. They combine cleverness, bravery, and activity, in their military character ; and are supposed, when in the field, to be the most efficient part of the Indian army.

On looking over the preceding pages, I am led to fear, that I have given a very unfavourable picture of India, and, at the same time, to regret that I cannot, consistently with truth, soften any of the traits. However, that tone of feeling, and that system of life, which I have described as prevailing among European society generally, are sometimes not at all discoverable in domestic circles, or in the private opinions and pursuits of individuals ; and one might, under certain circumstances, reside many years in the country, without being aware of the existence of any peculiarity of the kind. It is only on the broad surface of society, as seen in large and populous cantonments, that the repelling

features of Asiatic life are obtrusively visible. The small circles of retired out-stations display almost none of these, and are often quite exempted from their malign influence ; and it is at such places, I believe, that “ Life in India” appears under its most agreeable aspect. The back of the toad, though thickly studded with venomous blotches, still exhibits a few smooth spots ; and the society of the East, though protuberant with deformities, will afford many exceptions to its general character, as given in the preceding pages.

I am far from asserting, that it is impossible to enjoy much happiness in India. A moment’s recollection would furnish me with a hundred instances to the contrary ; in nearly all of which, however, I should find that the sources of enjoyment were unconnected with the country, or, at least, independent of it. If a man carries a store of European ideas, pursuits, and associations, into Asia, and takes care they shall not be corrupted, lost, or impaired, he may lead an agreeable enough life, and often manage to forget that

he is a prisoner in a tropical climate. He should endeavour to avoid acquiring those opinions and habits of feeling that are peculiar to it ; for he will find that the more he approximates in every respect to the prevailing state of things in his native country, the happier he will be. One, indeed, often hears this maxim inculcated, not from the idea that an adherence to it will add to present enjoyment, but as an inducement to preserving the recollection of European manners and customs, that people, when old Indians, may feel at home when they do go home. The penalties which those who have wholly abandoned themselves to Asiatic predilections and propensities incur, on returning to their native land after a long absence, are sufficiently severe to make any one, who has witnessed them, and is acquainted with India, determine upon resolutely cherishing European recollections, feelings, and tastes, under all circumstances whatever.

In India, a man's happiness and personal enjoyment are sometimes much affected by his

local situation. Should he be obliged to reside in a disagreeable and unhealthy climate, he will find little compensation for his sufferings in any pecuniary or other advantages which may belong to his appointment. Climate should be a consideration of the first importance to every sojourner in Asia, particularly as there is much room for choice on this point, some parts of the country possessing a great superiority over others in temperature and agreeableness. To have the use of one's faculties all day, and to enjoy undisturbed sleep at night, are things worth purchasing on almost any terms; at least, those who have felt the enfeebling effect of constant heat, and the harassing torments of feverish and broken repose, will think so.

The barrenness or fertility of a country, or its bleakness, or the beauty of its scenery, are of no consequence in a climate where one is imprisoned within doors from sunrise to sunset. Fine prospects cannot be enjoyed in India; and even rare as they are, few persons care to purchase a

view of them, by undergoing that exposure to heat, dust, and fatigue, which is the usual consequence of rambling abroad during daylight in the tropics. There, trees, rivers, and cultivated plains, yield in attractiveness to green blinds, cool claret, and Bengal mats ; and the beauties of nature are viewed with most pleasure and comfort after they have been transferred to canvass or drawing-paper, and hang upon the walls of people's houses.

It is remarkable, however, that amateur-gardening should be a favourite pursuit in India, where no man can have more than two hours' enjoyment in the open air out of the twenty-four. But the European horticulturist, in general, pays little attention to the productions of the country, and seldom cares about rearing them in perfection, his grand object being the successful culture of British vegetables. A vast deal of time, money, and labour, is often expended in this way ; and, in the majority of instances, without attaining the desired end. The potatoes,

pease, turnips, cauliflowers, &c. raised in Asia, are nine times out of ten totally inferior to similar articles in England ; but the pleased cultivator will seldom acknowledge this ; and perhaps insists upon conducting his guests or visitors through his garden in the meridian sun, that he may display to them stunted, shrivelled, and worm-eaten exotics, which are to cover his table in the evening, probably to the exclusion of those very dishes that would alone have made his dinner an acceptable one.

It is not my intention to ridicule the practice of pleasure-gardening so common in India ; but I think it should not be made to supersede every thing else, as is sometimes the case. When I enter a house, and find neither couch nor chair, nor a common mat, nor carpet, nor any glass in the windows, but am told by its possessor, that he has a fine garden and plenty of European cabbages, I cannot help smiling at his ideas of domestic comfort, and wishing that he would dismiss his weeders, his bullocks, and

his water-carriers, and convert his transitory drooping vegetables into permanent standing furniture.

With regard to the comparative advantages of residing in a large or in a small cantonment, I am inclined to give the preference to the latter. The society of India does not present variety enough to render it very enlivening ; and the only difference between an extensive and a confined circle is, that in the one you hear the same things oftener repeated than in the other, because there is a greater number of people to repeat them. The monotony of life, in a retired station, is such, that one ceases to expect any novelty, and therefore never is disappointed. He chalks out a scheme of enjoyment, and pursues it without interruption,—he calls all his resources and energies into action, and learns to make himself independent of external circumstances,—he tries to forget that he is in Asia, and manages to do so by thinking of things that have no connexion with the country. This, I

suspect, is the perfection of Indian life. The foregoing remarks of course do not apply to hog-hunters, horse-dealers, dog-breakers, and beer-drinkers. Their pursuits and enjoyments may be cultivated and promoted with equal success in almost any country; and I do not hesitate to pronounce them the happiest people in our Eastern dominions.

Thus, India may be made a tolerably pleasant place of abode, as long as one enjoys good health, and is fortunate enough to be stationed in a part of the country where the climate is agreeable; but when lingering disease and its attendant ills begin to assail the European resident, his exile becomes insupportable, and the tenor of his life one continued scene of languor, depression, and misery. No energies, however active, can successfully struggle against bad health in Asia; for no where does an invalid so soon yield to despondency, or so soon become impatient under personal suffering. The lowness of spirits which, in general, accompa-

nies even the slightest illness is indescribable, and is almost always conjoined with a vehement desire of revisiting one's native country, the finger of nature pointing out the best and most effectual restorative. The condition of an Indian invalid is a truly pitiable one, particularly if he has formed no domestic ties. He seems, as it were, alone in the world,—he knows that he has little claim upon the sympathy or interest of his acquaintances,—his native attendants are people who have no feelings in common with him,—he enjoys no command of external resources or pleasures,—and he lingers out, day after day, under this single consoling impression, that his wants will be provided for without any exertion on his own part until he is restored to health, or dies.

But this gloomy picture never will be realized, at least for any length of time, by those who take care to avoid such involvements as may detain them in India contrary to their inclinations. Pecuniary embarrassments,

resulting from a career of joyless extravagance, often prevent the victims of tropical disease from seeking the renovating influence of their native skies, and there acquiring that vigour of mind, and strength of constitution, which would make them alike healthful and happy during the years of their subsequent residence in India.

FOREIGN ADVENTURE.

FOREIGN ADVENTURE.

It is not always the love of gain that urges to foreign adventure. Young, ardent, and ambitious spirits, go abroad to seek those mental excitements which they cannot obtain at home. A quiet life, and a mediocrity of happiness and enjoyment, have no charms for them ; and the anticipation of dangers and difficulties and privations under foreign climes, is more exhilarating than the prospect of ease, security, and comfort, in their native country.

There is something in home which depresses the energies of an imaginative young man. The presence of his friends, acquaintances, and associates, and the knowledge he has of their pecu-

liar prejudices, and of the estimate they have formed of his character, are so many links of a chain which binds him down to remain what they think he is, and disables him from struggling to appear what he thinks he actually can be. He feels that he is capable of holding a higher place in society than others are willing to believe; but has not resolution to prove to his friends, that their preconceived opinions respecting him are erroneous and unworthy of his merit. The desire of escaping the benumbing influence of these domestic associations induces him to seek a foreign land, in the hope of enjoying, among strangers, that unimpeded exercise of his energies, and that degree of personal consequence, which he finds to be unattainable at home.

Foreign adventure frequently is a sort of intellectual knight-errantry; those who engage in it scorning mental inactivity and domestic quiet as much as men of honour and courage did in the days of chivalry. There is now no outlet for restless spirits, except excursions to foreign

countries in search of fortune ; and, common as these have lately been, the mere idea of going abroad on an uncertainty, has still something romantic in it to an aspiring and enthusiastic mind. The most determined and ingenious castle-builder finds it difficult even to imagine the possibility of his having his propensities for adventure gratified at home ; but he can conceive himself encountering a thousand difficulties, and placed in a thousand interesting situations, while traversing a distant land. That hatred of every thing common-place, which attends a love of romance, whets his appetite for the dangerous, the terrible, and the afflicting, and he thinks the vagabond and precarious life of an embarrassed and neglected adventurer, more respectable and dignified than the quiet seclusion and domestic tranquillity enjoyed by those who are contented with mediocrity at home.

This fever of the mind is unknown to grovelling and undeveloped beings, though it often leads its victims into extravagance and absurdity. In fact, it is the effervescence of a

soul anxious for an opportunity of exercising its faculties, trying the strength of its feelings, and enjoying violent changes of excitement. Persons of this character go abroad for the same reason that others go to see a tragedy. Both parties wish to be relieved from the insipidity of the things around them ; in the one case, the desire of novelty and of new states of feeling is boundless, and in the other, it is satisfied with a change of a few hours' duration.

However, by far the greater number of adventurers are animated by mercenary motives alone, which are much better adapted to ensure them success than romantic ones. The person who goes abroad solely for the purpose of improving his fortune, enjoys every advantage over those who have additional objects in view. The attention of the enthusiastic traveller is constantly distracted by the beautiful and the interesting. The lover of adventure often involves himself in difficulties, which prove equally prejudicial to his credit and to his purse ; and the man of science employs his time in pursuits which nei-

ther lead to prosperity, nor advance him in the estimation of others. But the determined money-maker directs all his energies to the attainment of one end, and *seizes* every opportunity that can promote his success. The coarseness of his feelings enables him to come unhesitatingly into contact with all sorts of people, and to practise arts, and endure humiliations, to which minds of a superior stamp will not submit. He has probably been forced from home by the impossibility of obtaining a respectable subsistence there; and the irritation of temper which this excites renders him desperate in his schemes, and indifferent about what means he uses for their accomplishment. The poor, needy, mean, uneducated, sycophantic refugee, is the character that succeeds in foreign adventure, and the only one that ever ought to undertake it. The man of liberal, honourable feelings, and elegant pursuits, almost always fails in acquiring *wealth or consequence* abroad, when he has no means of securing them independent of his own exertions.

- A third class of adventurers consists of young

men who, though able to provide for themselves, at home, go abroad in the hope of obtaining situations of *eclat*, and of becoming of more consequence than they could ever expect to be in their native country, which perhaps does not afford them any opportunities of exercising their talents, or of bringing themselves into public notice. They usually are well educated, well recommended, and have a tolerable supply of money. Their appearance, address, and the definite nature of their plans, at once distinguish them from the herd of common adventurers who indiscriminately forage for a subsistence, while their manners and their mode of life bespeak a degree of independence, which ensures them respect as long as their money lasts ; and when poverty does assail them, they are looked upon with pity instead of contempt.

An adventurer is an unpopular character everywhere, and one who, in the general opinion, is hardly entitled to the common civilities of life. He comes in such a “questionable shape,” that people think him a fair object of

distrust, and claim the right of demanding from him an account of himself, and of doubting the truth of what he relates. Being without any visible means of subsistence, he is universally suspected of having designs upon the pockets and credit of those among whom he resides ; and his acquaintances avoid any intimacy with him, and even **fear** to shew him kindness, lest he should be **emboldened**, in case of misfortune, to demand **assistance** from them, and to make an appeal to their benevolence. His society is tolerated instead of being courted ; and people do not hesitate to oppress and insult him, because he is destitute and helpless, and because they think he will not dare to resent their insolence ; it often being necessary, to the success of an adventurer, that he should be on the most conciliating terms with every one, in order to secure the interest of all.

In the adventurer, who is prompted to go abroad by the spirit of romance, the departure from home excites a thousand new and interesting emotions, which are unknown to the merce-

nary calculator under similar circumstances. The former feels the associations connected with his native place growing stronger and more passionate as the hour approaches which is to separate him from it, perhaps for ever ; and he has a melancholy pleasure in contrasting the peaceful tenor of his past years with those difficulties and disappointments which may perhaps attend his career abroad. He wanders among the scenes where he has been accustomed to nurse his imagination, and to indulge in those flights of fancy and schemes of happiness which he hopes to realize in foreign climes. He contemplates with tender regret the woods, rivers, and valleys, that have been the theatre of his early life and early joys, and which he, perhaps, at one time hoped would afford him repose in his declining years. He calls to remembrance the hours he has passed with the friends of his youth, and in the society of her who formed the object of a boyish love,—he dwells upon their rambles, their amusements, their characters, and their occupations,—he thinks of the enthusiasm, the

ardour, and the pleasure, which at those times reigned in his mind undisturbed, and enveloped him, as it were, in a fragrant cloud, through whose medium every circumstance, affection, and acquisition connected with human life, looked beautiful, dazzling, and of easy attainment. When he recollects those things, he almost suspects that, in forsaking home, he will forsake the seat of happiness, and regrets that his destiny leads him to seek his fortune in foreign lands. But the desire of novelty and excitement recurs ; and he tries, by anticipating a brilliant future, to forget what he has been, and what he has enjoyed, and to disencumber himself of all feelings and associations that have no reference to passing events and to the existing moment.

At length the day fixed for his departure arrives, and, instead of being able to nurse his feelings, and give way to what he thinks the refinement of sorrow, he finds it necessary to employ himself in a thousand things that are not at all affecting to the imagination. The preparations

for a journey are rather unromantic in their character, particularly when the person about to undertake it has to engage in them himself. The young adventurer experiences this, and is astonished and disappointed, that his emotions are not so strong as to render him incapable of attending to the common affairs of life, and of taking a share in the various trifling arrangements that immediately precede his departure. He sees his friends employed in their usual avocations, and apparently much less miserable than he expected they would be ; while, at the same time, his regret at leaving them falls short of what he had anticipated ; and the uncomfortable suspicion, that there is a deficiency of affection on their part, and of feeling on his own, arises in his mind, and he sets out from home in a state of despondency and dissatisfaction.

He next goes on board of ship, glad to find himself among people who have never before seen him, and to whom he has it in his power to appear what he pleases. Ignorant as he is of real life, he does not expect to encounter any

troubles, or to find himself placed in any interesting situations, during the voyage; but he employs himself in imagining what will occur to him after he reaches the land where he hopes to lay the foundation of his fortunes and of his happiness. He endeavours to prepare himself for every difficulty and disappointment that can occur, and to contrive means of averting and overcoming them when they do actually assail him. He forms plans of conduct and of behaviour to be adopted under different circumstances and towards different people, and invents expedients to be resorted to in all cases of ill success, failure, and difficulty, and congratulates himself on possessing that fertility of mind which he thinks will enable him to enter life with *eclat*, and will ensure to him a brilliant and uninterrupted course of prosperity.

Having arrived at his place of destination, his first experiment upon the people among whom he has thrown himself is the delivering of introductory letters; which he commences with alacrity and confidence, expecting to find every

one generous, hospitable, and anxious to assist him.

The first person he visits is perhaps a man of some consequence. He takes the letters from the hand of our adventurer as if he were receiving a petition, and had doubts of the truth of its contents. He reads them before he asks the bearer of them to be seated ; and then, instead of inquiring what his views are, or how he can be of service to him, enters into common-place conversation. This is carried on with so much politeness and affability, that the youth to whom it is addressed thinks he may venture to hint in what manner his entertainer's interest and influence will be available to him. The latter at once perceives his drift, and ingeniously prevents him from coming to an explanation. The adventurer finds it impossible to mention one word of his dearest concerns, and rises to take leave with an air of disappointment, which the other answers by inviting him to dinner next day, and adding, as he follows him to the door, that he hopes he will make his house his home

whenever it is convenient, which means, "my attentions will cease after to-morrow."

The young enthusiast is rather discouraged by the reception he has met with, and hastens to pay his respects to another individual, who receives him with cordiality, and expresses an anxious desire for his success and welfare ; but declares that he has no influence whatever himself, and must therefore engage his friends in behalf of one he so earnestly wishes to serve. The adventurer is delighted with this, and departs in high spirits; his new acquaintance having invited him to his house on a particular day. He goes at the appointed time, and is civilly entertained by his host, who laments that he has not been able to forward his views, complains of the indolence and backwardness of his own friends, is astonished they feel no interest in attending to his applications, and vows that they shall have no peace till they exert themselves in promoting the views of his guest. Another appointment, however, is made, and the deluded youth hears a repetition of the same assurances

and declarations. At length he discovers that his pretended patron has actually no power to assist him, either directly or indirectly, but that the vanity of appearing to possess influence makes him affect to have the command of that of his friends, to whose carelessness and neglect he plausibly imputes the failure of his plans and the non-fulfilment of his promises.

The yet sanguine adventurer now delivers a third letter of recommendation. The person to whom it is addressed has spent his early life in struggling against bad fortune, poverty, and unfriendedness. His hardships and difficulties, though now overcome and past, have made his temper austere, and his mind unfeeling and illiberal. It annoys him to think that any young man, on his outset in life, should escape similar trials, or indulge prospects of uninterrupted success and prosperity ; and he makes it a uniform practice to damp the aspirations of youth, and to throw gloomy shadows upon futurity. The first salutations are scarcely over when he says, “ I doubt if your plans will answer,—I am sure

they will not,—I'll do all I can, however, though I couldn't blame myself were I to do nothing; for I had no one to assist me or advance my interest when I came to this country. Letters of introduction were not in fashion in those days; but young men like to make their fortunes easily now. You'll find your situation a very unpleasant one here; but, I suppose, you won't mind that. Young men should love hardships; for it is the business of youth to bear them. Come and dine with me to-day; you see I use no ceremony with you. He who has his fortune to make must not be particular." The youth declines the invitation, and hurries indignantly from the house, astonished that he has failed to excite some interest in the bosom of one who, like himself, has, in his early years, had all the world before him, altogether forgetting that the similarity in their circumstances has been produced by the influence of causes that are very opposite in their nature.

Disgusted and discouraged, our adventurer almost hesitates to avail himself of his remain-

ing notes of introduction ; however, hope and curiosity prevail, and induce him to pay his respects to a fourth individual. This man receives him kindly, applauds his enterprise, assures him of brilliant success, and suggests various schemes to hasten and promote it. He points out new plans for his adoption, directs him in what manner he is to accomplish them, calculates their respective advantages, and brings fortune and prosperity, as it were, within his grasp. Our novice is charmed with the interest which his new friend appears to take in his affairs, and confides every thing to him. They part in mutual good-humour ; and the latter immediately attempts to reduce to practice the advice and theories which he has just been put in possession of ; but finds it impossible to do so. He then visits the author of them, for the purpose of communicating his difficulties, and inquiring how they are to be overcome. The gentleman hears all this in an easy and unembarrassed way, and declares he is annoyed, grieved, and surprised, at the failure of the plans he has sug-

gested ; but proposes a remedy, and recommends that it should be adopted without delay. The remedy appears as promising as the schemes did that preceded it ; but proves equally fruitless ; and our adventurer at length discovers, that his friend is too indolent to assist him personally, and too ignorant of the world to instruct him how to assist himself, and that the various plans of action, of which he has been the projector, have been contrived, less with a view to benefit the person requiring them, than for the purpose of amusing his own idle and vain imagination.

The adventurer next introduces himself to a man of polished manners, liberal ideas, and general intelligence. This person treats him with attention, and frequently invites him to his house, where he meets with elegant dinners and genteel company ; but he wants something more than these. He wishes his acquaintance to take an interest in his concerns, and to exert himself for his benefit ; but soon finds that such objects are unattainable. His host is pleased with his conversation, and fond of his society, and even

desires his welfare ; but, at the same time, is too proud to condescend to assist an adventurer. His backwardness, in this respect, does not proceed from want of feeling, want of power, or want of inclination, but from false ideas of dignity and propriety, and from a scrupulous regard for the opinions of the people around him. Our hero sees that, though his host will continue his hospitality for any length of time, he will not make an application, write a letter, or give a recommendation in his favour, were it to make his fortune, or save his life. A character of this kind proves an agreeable acquaintance, but a useless patron ; and, as the latter is what the adventurer is in quest of, he finds it necessary to seek for one in some other quarter.

Our youth delivers his remaining introductory letters with a bad grace, and finds that they are not more attended to than the others have been. He becomes irritated at his acquaintances, and resolves to break off all connexion with them. It annoys and humiliates him, when he reflects that all his plans to secure their in-

terest and excite their regard have completely failed, and that the styles of manners and modes of action, which he invented in anticipation, have proved inadequate, useless, and impracticable, in those very cases in which he thought they would be most effectual with others and most serviceable to himself. He feels that he is ignorant of mankind, and destitute of penetration ; but endeavours to believe that he has not chosen a proper field for the exercise of his powers, and that his acquaintances have been dull enough to mistake him for a common adventurer, and have consequently denied him those attentions and good offices which they would otherwise have bestowed.

He now determines to seek fortune in a place where he is quite unknown. He has been led to suspect that a card of recommendation generally prepossesses a man against the bearer of it, because it gives the latter a claim upon his kindness and hospitality, which he feels more inclined to resent or evade, than to answer and comply with, from its being hardly optional

with him whether he shall do so or not. The idea of struggling for success in life among strangers is pleasing to our adventurer, who ardently wishes to encounter a few difficulties, trials, and embarrassments ; and he gladly leaves the place where his cold-hearted acquaintances reside, and chooses a spot more congenial to his juvenile projects and enthusiastic reveries.

However, in attempting to force his way among people to whom he is totally unknown, he meets with impediments, annoyances, and humiliations, which he never had calculated upon, or even believed to be possible. He finds that honour, integrity, agreeable manners, and respectability of conduct, are not sufficient to advance a man to that station in society to which his merits entitle him ; and that the person who has neither wealth, rank, nor public favour, to help him forward, must, in most cases, substitute address, impudence, and false pretension, in the place of them, if he wishes to be of any consequence whatever. Here our adventurer feels his defects. Like all enthusiasts and lovers of

romance, he is troubled with diffidence and false modesty. He can imagine himself doing and saying fine, impressive, and irresistible things, but wants assurance to do and say them in reality. This throws him into the back-ground ; and, as he neither is rich nor powerful, nor of noble birth, he remains there ; for even those who are acquainted with his merits do not attempt, or even wish, to draw him into a more conspicuous situation.

There is no quality that is so much praised and so much despised as modesty. A modest person, taking the term in its common acceptance, is popular everywhere, and particularly among people of pretension and assurance. When a man enters a company of strangers, most of the persons comprising it are jealous of him, lest he should mortify their vanity and ambition, and throw them into the back-ground, by proving more agreeable and better informed, and making himself of greater consequence, than themselves ; but the moment they discover that he is a modest man, or, in other words, that he

is destitute of self-confidence, and unable to take his own part, they feel at ease, and treat him with a mixture of complacency and good-natured contempt. He may have the power of being very witty and very entertaining, but he does not possess the art of bringing his accomplishments into notice; and why should any one take that trouble for him? He therefore sits in a corner, neglected and unheeded, and people, as they pass along, triumphantly exclaim, “What a charming thing is modesty!”

Our adventurer, finding himself deficient in all those qualities that are calculated to secure the interest of strangers, and to enable him successfully to push his fortune in the world, grows melancholy and desponding. He loses spirit to combat even the difficulties and evils that he knows he can easily overcome, and every day feels more unwilling to engage in those struggles with adversity and disappointment, which seldom fail to chequer the early career of even the most prosperous adventurer. In proportion as his self confidence decreases, the estimation and

respect of others is withdrawn. He thinks people despise him, when they only are indifferent to him ; and reflects with shame on that ignorance of human life and human character, which has betrayed him into so many mistakes, and rendered him ridiculous in his own eyes. His wanderings in a foreign country have not produced any of those interesting adventures and affecting situations, which he at one time believed would be inseparably connected with them ; and, on reviewing the tenor of his life since he left home, he finds that it has proved a scene of delusion, disappointment, humiliation, and unrewarded anxiety.

Distracted by reflections of this kind, he forms desperate resolutions, and resolves never to revisit his native country till he has achieved at least part of those plans which formed the ostensible objects of his pursuit abroad. Finding it impossible to succeed in the sphere he first made choice of, he descends to a lower one, and seeks fortune in paths, in which, under other circumstances, he would be ashamed to

tread. His resources gradually fail ; and, scorning to ask assistance of any one, he embarks and perishes in some wild enterprise, or engages in an obscure occupation, and drags a life of discontent and misery, endeavouring to forget the past, and what he has been, and sternly indifferent about the future, and what he may appear to be. Such is the history and fate of many young men, who try to be the architects of their own fortunes, in places like Havana, New Orleans, and Sierra Leone.

The career of the money-making adventurer seldom is marked by any conflicts of emotion or acute disappointments. He cares little how men feel and conduct themselves towards him in general, provided they neither oppose his projects nor impede their accomplishment. He does not go abroad to seek sources of mental excitement, exercise for his affections, or food for his imagination ; and therefore never is led astray by the pursuit of such unsubstantial objects. He is always in readiness to turn every circumstance to his advantage, and to court for-

tune wherever he may find her disposed to smile upon him. Having little sensitiveness of mind, he neither feels nor resents neglectful treatment, but is submissive and conciliating to the people around him ; and, instead of soliciting their interest and good offices, shews, by his conduct, that he is contented to wait till they think proper to bestow them. The whole tenor of his life is marked by a humble subserviency, both to persons and to circumstances. He catches the drops that fall from the brim of the cup of prosperity ; but never makes an effort to get the vessel into his own hands, lest, during the struggle, its contents should be spilt and lost. He thinks no man too weak or mean to be useful to him, and no advantage too contemptible to be turned to his purposes ; and at length acquires those gifts of fortune, which are the rewards of prudence, caution, submissiveness, and self-denial.

The history of the young man that goes abroad in the hope of making a figure, and of at once obtaining a post of emolument and re-

spectability, is very easily told. He either succeeds to the utmost of his expectations, or not at all. However, the first part of his career is usually brilliant, and abounding with fine prospects. Introduced by powerful recommendations to the best society, liberally provided with money, caressed by his acquaintances, and encouraged by flattering promises, he leads a gay, extravagant, thoughtless, and improvident life. If the interest of his friends at last procures him the situation to which he has been aspiring, it probably is just in time to save him from ruin ; but if they fail, he finds himself totally unable to establish his own fortune, and speedily falls a victim to disappointment. On discovering that his patrons want the power or the inclination to serve him, he suddenly awakes to a sense of his perilous and destitute condition. The means of support are probably fast failing him ; but his pride prevents him from retrenching his expenses, and he continues to pursue his first course of life, irresolute what to do or which way to turn. At length he gets involved in debt,

and is bound to the spot where his fortunes have been wrecked. He struggles to keep up appearances to the last ; but his associates see how things are going with him, and become shy of his company. This cuts him to the heart, and makes him lose all self-respect. He confines himself to his miserable lodgings during the greater part of the day ; and when he does appear abroad, his haggard looks, slovenly dress, and unequal steps, hint the nature of his indulgences at home. He has begun to drink ardent spirits, and soon ceases to make any secret of it. However, when even this far degraded, he, perhaps, once or twice endeavours to rally and regain the confidence of his friends ; but fails, and sinks into a deep and unconquerable despondency, which wears down his constitution. He becomes hypochondriac, sickens, and dies, and is carried to his solitary grave by strangers and hirelings.

In the West Indies, I have met with many men whose histories tallied with what has now been related. They could easily be known by

their idle habits, their depressed spirits, and the look of humiliation which they wore. On conversing with them, one found their manners, intelligence, and acquirements, much superior to those of the people around them ; but they carefully avoided any allusion to what they had been, and endeavoured to appear contented with what they were. They passed their hours in languor and inactivity, and evidently had no object in view but that of forgetting themselves ; and when memory became troublesome, she was stilled by the influence of wine or brandy. Often have I watched the nightly return of such characters to their boarding-house, after an evening spent they hardly knew where or how. When all the other inmates of the house were asleep, I have observed the former drop in one by one, and stroll about the silent and half-lighted hall, apparently irresolute whether to go to their chambers, or to issue forth and commence anew their nocturnal revels. Exhausted, miserable, and stupified with ardent spirits, they would at last throw themselves into chairs,

or lay down on sofas or benches, and slumber till morning roused them to another day of quietude, dissipation, and wretchedness.

Such men, though relieved from their debts and their difficulties, would not go back to their native country. The shame of returning penniless and unsuccessful makes many an adventurer submit to poverty and privations abroad, when ease and comfort await his acceptance at home. The only rewards of foreign enterprise are wealth, and the personal superiority acquired by travel. But a man's friends will seldom acknowledge the existence of the latter, unless it be graced and rendered conspicuous by the lustre of the former.

The West Indies and the Southern States of America form at present the grand theatres for adventurers, to whom temperate climates are not at all favourable, the waste of human life in them not being sufficiently rapid to render a constant influx of strangers necessary. The European population of Jamaica undergoes a total change every seven years, and that of New

Orleans and of Sierra Leone is renewed twice in the same period. Two-thirds of the foreigners who come to reside in Havana die within six months after their arrival ; and in some of the Dutch East India islands the mortality is still greater.

It is from the deadliness of tropical climates that the ferocity of character which distinguishes European society in the West Indies and in the Southern States of America takes its origin. When men see their associates perishing around them, and know that they themselves may become death's next victims, they lose all tender feelings, and study self-preservation only. Life seems too short and uncertain to be wasted in the indulgence of human affections. Every one is aware of his danger, and scrambles to secure the means of flying from it. It is like a retreat after a battle, in which soldiers do not scruple to trample down their friends and companions in order to facilitate their own escape. So, in tropical climates, adventurers are obtuse to all circumstances unconnected with gain ; and even re-

joice to see their fellow-creatures precipitated into the whirlpool of destruction, when they happen to impede their progress through the avenues that lead to profit, preferment, and prosperity.

Revolting and unnatural as this state of feeling appears to a stranger, on his first visit to a tropical country, it ought to be contemplated with forbearance, as being excusable and unavoidable. No man ever resides under a bad climate, except for the purpose of acquiring the means of eventually living in a good one ; and, therefore, the adventurer who comes to the West Indies has no object in view but gain. His avowed business is to struggle against competition, bad fortune, disease, and death ; and any refinements of feeling would be fatal to his personal comfort and injurious to his interests. To avoid cheating his fellow-creatures, and to respect the common rights of humanity, is all that can reasonably be required of him ; for his situation is too desperate a one to admit of his having any concern for the welfare, happiness,

or safety of others ; and any professions to the contrary might justly be regarded as the offspring of hypocrisy, instead of the fruits of benevolence and disinterestedness.

Little can be said in favour of foreign adventure, even when successful ; those who engage in it losing in contentment and serenity what they gain in wealth and knowledge of the world. I have met with few instances of people, who had spent the greater part of their lives abroad, being afterwards happy at home. The rich West-India merchant, the American fur-trader, and the old East-Indian officer, alike feel themselves out of their element on returning to their native country, particularly if they have left it in early youth, and experience wants, uncomforts, and sources of uneasiness, which money neither can supply, remove, nor alleviate. Their friends see that they are discontented, but cannot imagine the reason ; and the sufferers are perhaps as little able to explain it to others as to themselves.

Those who never have been abroad do not

easily believe that a residence in a foreign country often disqualifies a man for enjoying life at home. Britain certainly contains the elements of happiness in a larger proportion than any other land ; and one may perhaps command these with more limited means than he could any where else ; but of what avail is all this, if his mind is incapable of extracting the least gratification from them ? The sojourner abroad too often loses all healthy perceptions and unsophisticated feelings. The operation of new scenes, new pursuits, and new states of society, for a series of years, produces in him a morbid state of mind and a love of excitement, and a passion for change, which are hostile to serene pleasures and to a serene mode of life. He may see and acknowledge the superiority and preferableness of these, without being able to feel it in his own case. The drunkard, accustomed to the stimulus of ardent spirits, will prefer the most noxious and fiery distilled liquors to the most delicate wine, though he may, at

the same time, confess and regret the baseness and coarseness of his taste.

People, who have passed their youthful years in active employment in tropical countries, certainly are not calculated for domestic life at home. They all are either too corrupt and depraved, to feel comfortable under the restraints which a refined and moral state of society imposes, or too restless and irritable to relish the unvarying routine of existence, as it passes in a family circle. They do not easily get reconciled to manners and modes of life to which they have long been strangers ; while, perhaps, the want of internal resources renders them very weary, languid, and discontented. The man, who has spent his youth and prime in accumulating money abroad, seldom possesses a cultivated mind, or has the faculty of making his understanding afford him the means of employment and recreation.

I am much inclined to doubt, if any man ever found himself happier or better after re-

siding abroad for a long period. Almost every country and every society contains something to excite the regrets of him who leaves them without the intention of returning. These haunt his mind when at home, awaken painful comparisons and associations, and divert, into a thousand sinuous channels, those feelings and affections which ought to flow in one quiet and continuous current. Although the tenor of his past life may neither have been vicious nor profligate, he will have acquired a knowledge of the baser parts of human character, and a familiarity with what is depraved and corrupt, that will infect his heart and principles, and prove fatal to the growth and existence of some of the most refined and amiable feelings of our nature.

An abode in a foreign land generally increases the number of a man's wants, and makes him more alive to the disagreeables and causes of annoyance that may be attached to his condition at home when he returns there. Should he

possess wealth, however, he will have the means of removing most of these sources of disgust; but he cannot purchase that buoyancy of spirits, and glow of contentment and cheerfulness, which, I think, belong exclusively to those who never have left their native land, or, at least, resided abroad long enough to acquire new manners and habits of feeling. That gloss, which makes life a theatre of novelty, and invests some of its worst parts with a fictitious charm, is completely destroyed, by the straightforward intercourse with the world, and by the scenes and peculiar situations which every man must go through, witness, and be placed in, whether pushing his fortune or quietly sojourning in a foreign country. The common enjoyments which existence affords lose their zest; and he is astonished to see people pleased, amused, and made happy, by things that, to his vitiated taste, appear alike valueless, insipid, and undesirable. Ill health, disappointment, ennui, and mortified ambition, often add bitterness to

the above sources of dissatisfaction, and perhaps combine to drive him back to permanent exile in the distant land where he has acquired his wealth, and has at the same time been rendered incapable of enjoying it.

THE

CANTONMENT OF SEROOR.

THE

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PERHAPS in no part of the world are monuments of human industry and of civilization sooner erected than in India, and perhaps nowhere do they so rapidly decay. The materials of the buildings are as unenduring as their inhabitants are transitory; and edifices, which bear the stamp of a venerable old age, have probably been raised, occupied, abandoned, and levelled by dilapidation, within a shorter space of time than in Europe would have been required to construct and complete them. The

Asiatic traveller, when he sees extensive ruins, does not seek for their origin in the records of past centuries, but learns their history from the by-standers; some of whom perhaps were born many years before the desolate walls which he is contemplating began to rise above their foundations.

The cantonment of Seroor is strongly illustrative of these remarks. Ten years have scarcely elapsed since it contained nine thousand troops and thirty thousand natives. A hundred of the former, and a twelfth part of the latter, are all that now remain; and the innumerable buildings, occupied by its former large population, have already become a mass of ruins, among which the benighted traveller would seek in vain for a roof to protect him from the storm, or a shed to shelter his horse.

The local features of Seroor mark it out as an admirable station for a large force. It abounds in strong positions, is well supplied with water, and enjoys a delightful and healthy climate. There are everywhere beautiful plains

for parades and for encampments; and the good roads in its vicinity afford facilities of communication with other places during all seasons. However, notwithstanding these advantages, the troops that occupied this favoured spot were removed several years ago, and Major-general Sir Lionel Smith, K.C.B., commanding the Poonah division of the Bombay army, and his personal staff, at present form the whole European population of Seroor. *Major-general Sir Lionel Smith*

The country around the cantonment is miserably barren, and altogether very untropical in its appearance. It abounds with small conical hills, which have scarcely any verdure upon them, even in the rainy season. One may travel several miles without seeing a tree or shrub, the place of these being supplied by large stones, which are the only objects that diversify the surface of the ground. During the monsoon, when the sky is obscured by lowering clouds, and when the rain beats and the wind blows chill and strong, Seroor exhibits all the wildness and dreariness of an uncultivated

northern region. At such times the atmosphere is uncomfortably cool, and fires would be very pleasant; but, from the construction of the houses, and the extreme scarcity of fuel, they are unattainable.

On ascending any of the high hills that bound the west side of the cantonment, one enjoys a complete view of its extensive ruins, and of the bazaar, or village, which was occupied by the natives, who followed the troops and supplied them with provisions. A beautifully level plain, skirted by two ranges of hills, stretches beneath the eye, and presents a confused assemblage of tenantless buildings of all sizes and forms, and in every stage of decay. Of some nothing remains but the bare walls; others are half unroofed; many have crumbled into heaps of ruins; and a few look as if they had been but recently deserted by their inhabitants. Two long and regular rows of buildings, extending the whole length of the cantonment, mark where the officers resided. All their houses had small gardens attached to them; and in many

spots, the hedges, shrubs, water-courses, flower-plots, and gravel-walks, still remain ; and in other places, a gateway, standing alone, shews where an enclosure has been, and forms an entrance to grounds that are now open and accessible on all sides. Here and there a wide and lofty arch points out the site of a mess-room ; and in another quarter, a square building, with high walls, is all that remains of a tennis-court. Low huts, once the residences of servants, horse-keepers, gardeners, and palanquin-bearers, are scattered about in the vicinity of the houses ; and ranges of deserted stables bound the ends of the enclosures, and can now with difficulty be recognised as having once formed quarters for innumerable horses. A little farther off are the hovels of the native soldiers, crowded together, and forming an undefined mass of rubbish ; and beyond them lie the ruins of a village, which, a few years ago, contained thirty thousand inhabitants ; but the whole unoccupied extent of which does not now present to the view one entire habitation. Behind the bazaar, and along the extreme

outskirts of the cantonment, a small river, called the **Gornuddy**, meanders with a clear and gentle current, and yields a delightful relief to the eye, after wandering over such a tract of gloom and desolation as has just been described. Barren hills rise abruptly from the banks of the stream, and a succession of others of superior elevation appear beyond them, and with their summits circumscribe the horizon.

Nothing can be more beautiful and impressive than this scene, when moonlight communicates to the ruins a mellowness of outline, and a solemnity of aspect, of which they are destitute during the day. The detached walls and broken arches then look grand and antique, and one may see the rays of the moon darting through the windows of the buildings, and illuminating their gayly-painted apartments, as if in mockery of the transient festivities that once enlivened them. Jackalls and Paria dogs prowl about the enclosures, and pursue their prey undisturbed by any noise except that of their own cries; and the roads which intersect the canton-

ment, and were once thronged with people, lie deserted and untrod, except by the feet of wandering cattle.

On descending to the plain, the attention is first attracted by the ruins of the bazaar. These, though extensive, have no variety. The houses are low and small, and all of them are built on nearly the same plan. They contain few memorials of their inhabitants, except clay fire-places, broken altars, and diminutive recesses for the images of their gods ; and no one acquainted with the character and habits of the lower orders of the natives of India would care to find any thing more. Their intellectual feebleness, their frivolity, and their despicable style of life, all combine to shut them out from the sympathies of a European. Though half-civilized, they are unworthy to take precedence of the most barbarous nations, in those points which render a people objects of interest and curiosity ; and therefore the traveller will wander among the modern ruins of this village, without feeling a wish to ascertain where its in-

habitants have gone, or whether they are dead or alive.

Instead of lingering near the bazaar, he will turn his steps towards those buildings that were once occupied by European officers. Here there is greater scope for the exercise of imagination ; and in walking through this part of the cantonment, one is irresistibly led to sketch ideally the characters of its former inhabitants, and to people the deserted apartments with the creations of his fancy.

The first house he happens to cast his eyes upon may have been the residence of a sportsman, whose hopes, joys, and anxieties, were centered in the chase, and who had not a single idea unconnected with his favourite pursuit. He disregarded and despised all persons who did not join his hunting expeditions, and preferred the sight of a wild hog, or of a wolf, to that of an agreeable man or an interesting woman. Society was nothing to him ; and it was a scarcity of animals, not of human beings, that made a place dull and disagreeable in his eyes.

His estimate of different countries was formed from a consideration of the goodness of their respective breeds of dogs and horses ; and if he chanced to feel a wish to return to his native land, it was because he thought the fowling-pieces, grooms, or terriers, were better there than in India. He was silent and reserved in company, and fell asleep when people talked of what he did not understand. He always became drowsy after dinner, if hunting did not form the subject of conversation ; but, in the latter case, he talked fluently—told extraordinary stories—teased the ladies with the exploits of his dogs, and, on the breaking-up of the party, went home, saying, he had spent a most delightful evening. He scorned to use any precautions against a tropical climate, and drank beer and smoked segars before breakfast, and was at last carried off by an illness of six or seven hours' duration. His friends and acquaintances, on hearing of his death, cried, “ Ah, poor Bob’s gone out !—He was a damnation

good fellow!—This brings Tom to his majority!"

That house, a little way off, belonged perhaps to an Indian fop, debauchee, and epicure,—characters which, in tropical countries, are usually found united. His time was occupied in dressing, dining, and quarrelling with his cook. He rose at an early hour in the morning, not for the purpose of taking exercise, but that he might have time to prepare his person before breakfast was served up. Bathed, perfumed, anointed, and laced in corsets, he issued from his chamber and sat down to a luxurious meal, which his debilitated organs prevented him from enjoying. After an hour spent at table, he retired to an elegantly-furnished apartment, and, reclining on a couch, anxiously awaited the arrival of visitors, not because he wished to see them, but because he wished them to see him. The most frivolous amusements engaged his time and attention; and the arranging of his smelling-bottles, china-boxes, and couch-carpets,

formed a subject of serious deliberation. He hated all military duty, except dress-parades ; and when he paid visits and attended parties, it was not for the sake of society, but that he might have an opportunity of displaying a splendid uniform. Though old and grey-haired, his grand ambition was to pass for a man of intrigue and a favourite with the sex. His vanity in this point was satisfied with the coarsest food ; and the reputation of being familiar with even the wife of his housekeeper, or of his cook, flattered and elevated him in his own eyes. He preferred the company of young men to that of his contemporaries, because the former did not remind him that he was old, and because they humoured his folly by rallying him upon his debaucheries and the licentiousness of his life, and gave him credit for excesses, in which old age and debility had long prevented him from indulging. His attention to females was delicate and becoming ; but, when their backs were turned, he endeavoured to degrade them into mere sensualists. In his eyes,

a virtuous woman was either a fool or a hypocrite ; and he never began to respect one of the sex till she had ceased to respect herself. His table-equipage, his wines, and his dishes, were all of the best and most expensive kind ; and even when without company, he dressed ceremoniously for a dinner which he felt little inclination to partake of. However, fine clothes and high living formed his supreme good ; and the daily happiness of a man, perhaps about to enter his grand climacteric, was dependent upon the exertions and activity of a Portugee cook and a Mahratta tailor.

Yonder house, from its size and accommodations, appears to have been occupied by a family, perhaps by a brother and his sisters, or an uncle and his nieces. The young ladies were probably sent out to India at the desire of their protector, who, holding a lucrative situation, and residing in a populous cantonment, thought his wards could hardly fail by marriage to establish themselves in life soon after their arrival. •However, unfortunately, they did not

turn out so pretty, so handsome, or so agreeable as he expected, and he began to grow heartily tired of them, particularly as no suitors seemed disposed to come forward. He now found it necessary to push matters. The girls were provided with a handsome equipage, and with showy dresses; and their protector began to give dinners and evening-parties, which, in one sense, were very select; for no man could get a seat at his table, any more than he could have a seat in parliament, unless his annual income equalled a certain amount. All who had this qualification were welcome guests, whatever their characters, manners, acquirements, or personal appearance might be; and a stranger, on surveying the individuals that usually encircled his board, would have thought that he took particular compassion on the old, the maimed, the infirm, and the diseased, and made such men the exclusive partakers of his hospitality; and it was so; for he not only gave them dinners, but wished to provide them with nurses and companions to enliven their homes. Lieutenants

and ensigns, and others low in the service, were entirely excluded from these festivities ; and if such persons happened to make a morning visit, they were received with cold courtesy, and allowed to sit unnoticed on a couch, and employ themselves in admiring their own uniforms. But rich majors, gouty colonels, and bilious collectors, however disagreeable, met with flattering attention and respect, until each of the young ladies had succeeded in manœuvring one of them into the toils of matrimony. The guardian, having now cleared his house of his wards, returned to his former style of life ; but, while congratulating himself on the address he had displayed in procuring them such comfortable establishments, had the same game played upon himself by one of their husbands, and was entrapped into an alliance with his sister or cousin, before he even suspected that the parties had any such design upon him.

That large building, with the arch in the middle of it, must have been the mess-room of some regiment. How silent now are those walls

that once nightly echoed to the voices and songs of their convivial inmates! In that corner, perhaps, stood a billiard-table, constantly surrounded by idlers, the noise of whose tongues was as incessant as the rattling of the balls which they used in the game. In the centre of the hall was the mess-table, at which twenty or thirty officers of all grades daily assembled, to discuss the affairs of their regiment, the chances of promotion, the merits of particular dogs and horses, and the looks and characters of the ladies of the cantonment. On one side sat the old colonel, anxious to retire from the service, but unwilling to resign a good income; opposite was the officer next in seniority, talking to him of the pleasures of home, the cheap living there, and the benefit his constitution would derive from the climate of England; another place was occupied by a young ensign, impatient for a lieutenancy, and condemning to an early death one-third of the people around him; while his anticipated victims were at the same moment whispering to each other that he himself was

the worst life in the company. Here one party sat talking of a reported increase in the military establishments ; there, a knot of sportsmen were arranging a hunting expedition. At this end some were disputing about the terms of a bet ; and, in another quarter, a set of dandies were commenting upon uniforms, epaulets, and facings. Ease, good humour, and hilarity, once reigned constantly within these walls, that now are as silent as the graves that contain many of the persons that formerly enlivened them with their presence ; and death must still be at work among the surviving remnants, not one of whom perhaps will ever return to his native country !

The house that next presents itself may have been the residence of one who first was a spend-thrift, and afterwards a poor invalid. On coming to India, he fancied that the prospects of wealth which the country afforded were boundless, and that he had nothing to do but to enjoy himself. In possession of vigorous health, he ridiculed the idea of providing for the future,

and indulged in every species of extravagance, and eventually got involved in debt. The hour of need and trial at length came. He had an attack of illness, and found, that, unless he removed to a European climate, he would fall a victim to tropical disease. That passionate desire of revisiting home, which often affects sick people in India, arose in his heart, and occupied all his thoughts, but carried agony with it ; for he knew too well that his wishes could not be gratified. He had no means of meeting the expenses of a voyage to Europe, or of supporting himself there ; and was aware that his creditors would not consent to his leaving India, unless he gave security to the amount of what he owed them. This was impossible ; and he found himself condemned to live and die in exile. The East had now lost its attractions in his eyes, and its customs, its amusements, and its society, were alike distasteful to him. One sentiment filled his mind, to the exclusion of all others, and that was the love of home, which he, perhaps, had scarcely ever felt during his hours of health,

gayety, and extravagance. Long-forgotten associations, visions of past pleasures, images dear to youth, and scenes of domestic happiness, haunted him night and day, embittering existence, and rendering detestable his situation, his associates, and every thing around him. His mind and body were now alike diseased ; but their reaction upon each other gradually became more feeble, and he felt himself dying ; and, at the same time, had the melancholy conviction, that a return to his native country would revive the powers of life, and restore his original health and vigour. Nature could not long struggle against harassing disease and acute disappointment, and he soon found a solitary grave in the plains of India.

That house towards the left was perhaps the abode of a character not uncommon in India society,—one who sacrificed the certainties of the present to the possibilities of the future. He had left his native country at an early age, and his grand ambition had always been to return to it with immense wealth. In pursuance of this

object, he practised the most rigid economy, and denied himself all those comforts and enjoyments that other persons of his rank indulged in without hesitation. He consoled himself, under the want of them, with the assurance that he was fast amassing money, and hastening the period at which he would be able to revisit home in the possession of a liberal fortune. His happiness consisted entirely in anticipation ; and he considered his enjoying the present as an unwarrantable encroachment upon those pleasures which he had reserved for the future. The vividness of his imagination concealed from him the delusiveness of his prospects. He was continually drawing conclusions before he had established the premises. The slightest report of the death or resignation of any of his seniors,—of an increase of pension, or augmentation of the army,—of the payment of prize-money,—or of any occurrence that was favourable to his interests, served as a foundation for new hopes and new schemes connected with the future. When his friends visited him, they usually found

him with the army-list in his hand, calculating the chances of promotion, and anticipating every one's death but his own. He would sometimes take it in his head to kill three or four men in a morning, and would promulgate their decease with a degree of confidence, that imposed upon even those who were acquainted with his character and peculiar propensities. When any of his auditors convinced him that the parties were alive, he would say that it was of no consequence, because he could prove that they would all be dead in a very short time. He talked continually of what he intended to do, and how he intended to live on going home, and declared that he felt indifferent about what he did, or how he lived, till then. Years after years glided away without bringing about the fulfilment of his plans and expectations ; but his pursuits made him insensible to the lapse of time, and he grew old without knowing it. At length, after a long period of discomfort, privation, and harassing economy, he began to make preparations for quitting India, and commencing his long-anticipated

career of pleasure and felicity ; but he was carried off by sudden illness, leaving his fortune to be dissipated by relations who had encouraged him in his schemes of prospective happiness, and secretly cherished the hope that his death might throw his wealth into their hands before he had an opportunity of spending and enjoying it in the way he had proposed eventually to do.

There might have been the residence of another person who thought that wealth would prove the key of happiness in his native country. He perhaps passed thirty years of his life at out-stations, where he was almost totally secluded from European society, and in a manner insulated from the civilized world. But he did not at all regret this, as it enabled him to live as penitulously as he chose, and to accumulate an immense fortune. He at length went home ; but, for the first time in his life, felt himself abroad, and in a strange land. During his residence in India he had totally neglected to keep up European associations and habits of feeling, or to acquire any knowledge of the existing state of

manners and modes of life in Britain. Instead of being treated with respect and deference, he was ridiculed and despised as a monster too untutored and uncouth to be endured in good society. He found it impossible to rid himself of his Asiatic ideas and customs, and to substitute English ones in their place, and suffered daily mortifications, and got into innumerable scrapes, in consequence of his ignorance of the world and of human character. His wealth could not supply these deficiencies, nor blind people to them. The men pitied him, the women made him their sport, and his relations stripped him of his money. When in society, he merely filled a chair, being unable to take any part in conversation, or to increase in any way the comfort or enjoyment of the circle of which he happened to be a member. He could, indeed, talk of the Pindarees, describe tiger-hunting, or give a history of the cruelties of some Nabob ; but unfortunately he found that no one took the least interest in subjects of the kind, or wished to hear him descant upon them. He had in-

tended to provide himself with a young and fashionable wife, but his gallantry was too boorish to be acceptable to women of any pretensions ; and they either turned him into ridicule, or avoided his company. In short, he was rich, and nothing else ; and he learned, when too late, that wealth had not the omnipotent influence that is often ascribed to it. Too proud to bear neglect with indifference, he at length abandoned all intercourse with any but old Indians of his own standing ; and, in their company, endeavoured to enliven the dulness and monotony of age by recollections of an equally dull and monotonous youth ; but this sort of life soon ceased to be endurable, and he returned to India with the determination of never again quitting it.

That mean-looking house perchance formed the abode of one whose mode of life seemed inconsistent with his rank and circumstances, and who denied himself every thing beyond the mere necessaries of life. His prudence, his economy, and his penuriousness, were the ridi-

cule of his acquaintances. He had the character of a determined money-maker ; and when people calculated the amount of his monthly savings, they despised his avarice, and regretted that fortune had been so liberal to one whose narrow-mindedness made him abuse her bounty. He quietly heard the taunts of his associates ; for pride and a sense of his own dignity restrained him from making those disclosures which would have silenced them for ever. His penuriousness did not arise from the love of money. He had parents, or brothers and sisters, in destitute circumstances at home, and it was to provide them with the comforts of life that he dispensed with such himself, and bore the ridicule and animadversions of his companions and acquaintances. An unwillingness to impeach the respectability of his relations, by avowing their poverty, likewise sealed his lips as to the cause of his imputed avarice, and made him more patiently endure the slights to which it daily exposed him. At length he died ; and people, on inquiring the amount of his wealth,

learned, to their astonishment, that the funds he had left were hardly sufficient to defray his funeral expenses; but that he had been a willing martyr to poverty in the cause of benevolence, and had sacrificed his personal comfort and the respect of the world to the noble pride of fulfilling the duties imposed by filial love and fraternal affection.

After strolling along the whole range of officers' houses, one comes, very appropriately, to a burying-ground, which, indeed, forms the chief outlet of almost every cantonment in India. The burying-ground of Seroor, however, is small, and does not contain so many graves as might be expected. Though rather pleasingly situated, it wants the hallowing influence of a church in the midst of it, and the solemn shade of lofty trees, such as surround most receptacles for the dead in Britain, and throw a melancholy sombreness over them, that accords well with the purposes to which they are applied. An unsheltered burying-ground in India, bleaching beneath the glare of a fervid sun, and exposed to the in-

vasions of wolves and jackalls, is not the least striking part of an Asiatic landscape, and is one that has in it something repulsive to British feelings.

The only remarkable tomb in Seroor is one that was erected to the memory of Colonel Wallace, who died in command of the cantonment, and so much beloved by the natives, that they honoured him with an apotheosis, and now daily perform religious rites at his cemetery, where an officiating priest attends, and sometimes keeps a lamp burning during a great part of the night. His apparition, it is said, frequently walks round the lines at midnight; and the Sepoy sentries are in the habit of presenting arms at the time they expect it to pass before them. The priest declares that a voice from his tomb has more than once uttered prophecies and revelations; and the natives believe this, and seldom engage in any thing important without making an attempt to propitiate the shade of the departed Colonel Wallace.

At the other extremity of the cantonment is

a small eminence, called Scandal-Point, where the idlers of Seroor used to assemble in the evening, and amuse themselves with that kind of conversation which is indicated by the name of their place of rendezvous. Scandal-Point overlooks a beautiful plain, that served for parades and for a pleasure-riding ground, and was every afternoon crowded with carriages, pedestrians, and horsemen, who were attracted to the spot by its convenience, its gayety, and the music of a military band ; but all this pageantry has passed away, and now the dull expanse is seldom enlivened by any objects more interesting than cattle, Paria dogs, and crows.

One evening, on ascending the eminence above-mentioned, I found a new and brilliant scene awaiting me. A Bengal regiment, on its march to Bombay, had that day arrived at Seroor, and the esplanade that lay in front of me was covered with tents of every size and description, from the shewy one of the field-officer to the humble canopy of the simple-minded Hindoo. Crowds of people were wandering along the

avenues of the encampment, and the busy hum of their voices was scarcely drowned by the bugles and drums, neighing of horses, tinkling of camel-bells, and creaking of baggage-waggons, that mingled disorderly together. British officers and their ladies, horse-keepers, camel-drivers, palanquin-bearers, native women and children, water-carriers, and European soldiers and their wives, might be seen passing and repassing in varied groups ; the respective costumes, languages, and complexions of which, formed contrasts equally vivid and amusing. In different parts of the esplanade, elephants, gayly caparisoned, and surmounted with small pavilions, paced majestically along, waving their probosces over the heads of the diminutive-looking people and animals around them. Camels were seen everywhere ; some going to water, others devouring their fodder, and a third set crouching on the ground while people were unloading them. Long lines of bullocks, country horses, and artillery-waggons, formed the outskirts of the encampment ; and the multitudes of people that

attended them made the bustle there as noisy and animated as it was in the centre of the plain.

On descending from the Point, I first observed a number of Hindoos sitting under a scanty covering of canvass, supported by short sticks. They were taking their evening-meal in profound silence, amidst a cloud of smoke that rose from a small fire in the midst of them. I next passed the tent of an officer. It was lined with crimson, and brilliantly lighted up ; and a party of officers in uniform sat round a table, which displayed a variety of dishes, wines, and silver-plate. A range of Hindoo servants, in fanciful liveries, attended the board, and their grave looks and solemn demeanour corresponded ill with the unbounded gayety and social ease of their masters. On advancing a little further, I saw a crowd of *coolies*, or native porters, huddled together beside the burdens they had carried during the day, and talking with as great vivacity, and apparently enjoying themselves as much, as the European military in their

immediate vicinity. I now came to the tent of a private soldier. He and his comrades were drinking arrack together, and talking of the pleasure of revisiting Ireland, after long years of exile in India. A little way off was a native priest and beggar sitting on the ground, counting his beads, and calling out that he would secure admission into heaven to all who bestowed alms upon him; but his offers of salvation were sometimes rendered unintelligible by the loud voices of a troop of Indian courtezans, who danced round a vase of flowers, and sung the popular love-songs of their country.

On revisiting Scandal-Point the succeeding evening, I found every thing again desolate and deserted. The camp and its assembled multitudes, the elephants, the camels, the oxen, the carriages, and the tents and fires of the native followers, had totally disappeared. A depressing gloom and silence reigned over the tenantless plain as it stretched beneath me, dimly illuminated by the lurid glare of a sun setting amidst thundery clouds. I observed a vulture, gorged

with carrion, hopping lazily along, and flapping its wings, and looking at me as carelessly as if I had been one of the large grey stones that lay around the little mount on which I stood. A solitary jackall likewise appeared at a distance in quest of prey ; and, warned away alike by these intruders and by the departing twilight, I hastened home-wards.

The aspect of a deserted cantonment is a perpetual source of melancholy impressions to those who reside in it, particularly if they have known the spot when full of inhabitants, and have witnessed their gradual removal by death, or change of abode. In India, every one loves to see a large society around him, as the pleasures of social intercourse form almost his only compensation for what he there suffers from the climate. Those who are stationed at such places as Seroor, not only live in comparative solitude, but know that their condition, in so far as regards society, will suffer no amelioration ; for a cantonment, once abandoned, has little chance of ever being occupied. The ruins,

which to a stranger visiting the spot form its only attraction and interest, are, to the remaining inhabitants, painful memorials of dead and absent friends, and gloomy monuments commemorative of former years and of past enjoyments.

THE DELINQUENT.

THE DELINQUENT.

THE third act of “*Il Flauts Magico*” had commenced in the London Opera-house. The orchestra was pouring its rich and varied harmony to a crowd of more or less impassioned listeners, and conveying to them emotions and shades of feeling which, to them, were almost independent of the accompanying language. Every eye rested upon a young female performer, who was about to begin a song ; and its announcing symphony had just ceased, when Owen Falconveer entered the theatre. His eyes almost immediately met her’s, and they ex-

changed glances of mutual recognition and tenderness. They had long passionately loved each other ; and Owen now came to give her one farewell look, for his fate demanded that they should part for ever,—and on that night too.

Mariette was unconscious of her impending misfortune, and went through her song and recitation with all the beautiful enthusiasm that usually characterized her acting. While Owen gazed and listened, he almost forgot his miserable situation in the rapture which the fair creature's performances inspired. Her voice, as heard among the flutes, bassoons, and hautboys, made his heart palpitate and his frame tremble. A languid voluptuousness stole over him, and his senses became, as it were, lost in a short-lasting hallucination, which shut out every gloomy thought, and concealed every fearful prospect, except when his crimes and his danger obtruded themselves momentarily upon his recollection, like the wild and ghastly faces that often glimmer amidst the pageantry of our most

brilliant and joyous dreams. He had almost insensibly withdrawn his eyes from Mariette ; for her image floated in his mind with a vividness more intense than belongs to the realities of vision. But the concluding chords from the orchestra made him start up and look towards the stage. She vanished with a light step ; another voice began to sing ; and Owen felt himself no more in heaven. He buried his face in the crimson curtain of the box, and threw himself back upon the seat in bitter sorrow and desperation.

Owen's story thus far may be shortly and simply told. He was the son of a clergyman, and had spent his early youth in a retired part of the country, secluded from society, and ignorant of the great world. Both his father and mother died before he had completed his education, or engaged in any particular profession ; and a distant relation then took charge of him, and eventually procured for him a situation of considerable trust and responsibility under government. His removal to London followed

this, and he soon got initiated into all the excesses and extravagancies of gay life, and, among other indiscretions, fell in love with a female performer at the opera. This attachment was an expensive one, owing to the generosity of his disposition, and the improvident habits of his enslaver, who accepted his presents, and spent his money, without ever considering that she was involving him in fatal difficulties. Owen's style of life likewise was very expensive, and his income, though good, proved totally insufficient for his purposes. He had long been aware of this ; but had postponed the day of retrenchment from time to time. In short, he was completely ruined. He had that morning received an intimation, that his public accounts would be examined and audited in the course of the ensuing week ; and a little calculation had shewn him that he had embezzled many thousand pounds of government money, and would therefore be a defaulter to that amount. He saw no possible means of avoiding public punishment and disgrace, and determined to take flight without delay. He

even now almost feared to appear abroad, lest his delinquencies should already have been suspected ; but he had not resolution to bid Mariette farewell, and had visited the theatre that he might see her in her glory, and in her beauty, once before he quitted England.

Owen, as he looked on the gay crowd around him, recalled the time when he had first beheld Mariette. The opera and its fascinations were then new to him, and, on entering the house, he was dazzled, agitated, and confused, with the magic splendours of the scene. The visions, in which he had indulged while in rural retirement and seclusion, seemed to be suddenly realized, and life at once became invested with a thousand delights and attractions, which he had formerly believed to exist in the ideal world only. The exquisiteness of the music, the glow of the lights, the loveliness of the female faces, the richness of their dresses, and the heat and closeness of the air, all combined to bring on a delicious and overpowering intoxication. His senses dissolved one into another, and lost their individual distinct-

ness ; and an assemblage of beautiful objects was spread before him in radiant confusion. Splendid architecture, distant perspectives on the stage, graceful forms, soft perfumes fanning in the air, and harmoniously combined voices, seemed to involve themselves on every side, and to float languidly in the mixed atmosphere of pleasure that encompassed him. He was surrounded by beings seemingly more lovely than ever appeared in daylight, and he was unwilling to break the delusion by any unseasonable act of thought,—he heard their playful talk, and even felt their breath upon his cheek, and caught the perfumes that exhaled from their rich and glossy hair. The language of Italy for the first dropped blandly upon his ear, and though he understood it not, he *felt* what it meant, and listened with strange delight to the songs and dialogues of men and women belonging to a foreign clime ; while the accompanying strains, composed by the cunningest master of harmony, and poured forth by a choir of every kind of wind and stringed instruments,

filled him with pleasing horror. To one, who had before heard no music but the simple melodies of his native land, the voice of an orchestra was entrancing, whether it spoke in the melancholy language of hautboys and French-horns, or in the keen and transparent tone of violins, or was heard in the thunders and tumult of a conjoined and numerous band of performers. It was amidst the elevation of spirits arising from those excitements, that Owen first saw Mariette and loved her; and the frequent repetition of them had, in a great measure, kept alive the violence of his passion, which, under other circumstances, might have gradually abated. In the habit of regularly attending the opera, he had enjoyed an opportunity of almost nightly seeing Mariette dressed with taste and splendour, and hearing her sing the impassioned airs of Italy, with an enthusiasm and feeling that were equally captivating to himself and to her auditors. These festal attractions were at length associated with her image, and Owen regarded

her as a being who lived constantly in a peculiar sphere of her own, where there was nothing but music, animation, applause, and magnificence.

The curtain had dropped, and the audience nearly dispersed, before Owen thought of leaving the theatre. At length, wrapping himself up in a boat-cloak, he hurried out by a private passage. On reaching the street, he observed Mariette's carriage driving off, and doubted not that she was in it. A sudden impulse induced him to pursue the vehicle, which moved very rapidly, and he commenced running, and kept up with it in a state of desperation for a considerable time. But he gradually lost ground, and was at last obliged to stop from exhaustion. The carriage turned the corner of a lane and disappeared. He gazed after it for a moment, and then exclaiming, "What have I been doing! What is the object of all this!" looked around, and found himself in a silent part of the city, and far from the quarter to which he had intended to go on quitting the opera-house.

The watchmen were suspiciously observing his agitated motions, and he began to walk at a more sedate pace towards Blackwall.

Owen's arrangements were already made. He had engaged a passage in a ship bound for Jamaica. She was now lying in the river, in readiness to proceed to sea at an early hour next morning. Under the fictitious name of Linder he hoped to escape detection and public disgrace, and, by a new and respectable course of life, to make an *amende* for the crimes and follies of the past.

He now hurried towards the Thames, that he might embark before daylight should expose him to observation. The streets were silent and deserted, and he pursued his way without interruption, and reached Blackwall as the bell of St Paul's tolled three. However, there was no boat to be had at that early hour, and he found that he would be obliged to defer going on board of ship till some watermen made their appearance. The morning was dim, hazy, and chill, and the light no more than sufficient to

enable him to discern his vessel, which lay at anchor in the midst of the river. Owen now looked for a place where he could seat himself, and entered a ruined building near the bank of the Thames. The walls were scorched and blackened ; part of the roof had fallen in, and the quantities of rubbish and half-burnt timber that lay inside, shewed that the house had been destroyed by fire. The gloominess of this desolate abode was congenial to his feelings ; and he went into an inner apartment, and stretched himself upon some planks, resolving patiently to await the approach of dawn.

He had not continued long in this situation, when he heard the roll of a carriage, which seemed to be approaching in the direction of the house. When pretty near, it suddenly stopped, and Owen could soon after distinguish footsteps coming towards his retreat, and whispering voices. He kept perfectly quiet ; and a female figure, wrapped in a long mantle, and attended by a man of fashionable appearance, entered the building, but did not proceed beyond

the outer apartment. Owen therefore remained undiscovered ; and the two strangers began to converse, not suspecting that they could be overheard. “Look at me for the last time,” said the lady, in a tone of calm despair. “It is impossible we can ever meet again. I have only to ask, that you will nightly pray that our ship may perish in the midst of the ocean, far from the abode of him whom I have so cruelly injured.”—“Caroline, my love,” returned her companion, “you talk distractedly. Oh, infatuated girl ! would you but remain in England till ——” “Hush, hush,” cried she, “do not attempt to persuade me. What ! would you wish my fatal error to become public ? Would not your projected plan of seclusion be an acknowledgment of it ? Secrecy would be impracticable. But you mistake me. My honour is in my own hands, and shall be saved. On some dark stormy night at sea I will elude the present and forthcoming tempests.”—“This is madness,” interrupted he ; “did I suspect that you were bent on self-destruction, you

should never leave these shores till you had renounced the idea. But come, let us fly together to some distant part of the world. I will give up every thing for your sake."—"No," returned the lady vehemently, "my determinations are unalterable. Though guilty, I am not selfish. Return to your wife, and, in making her happy, try to forget what misery you have occasioned me."

At this moment the carriage began to move down the lane, and the noise of its wheels prevented Owen from hearing the reply. However, a flash from the lamps of the vehicle, as it drove past the building, fell upon the female, and shewed her dress to be a blue mantle, edged with white fur. The voices of watermen, and the dashing of their oars, were now distinguishable; and the mysterious couple hastily left the house, and Owen fancied that he heard the lady sobbing as she went out. He watched their movements, and saw them proceed to the side of the river and embark in a boat, which immediately shot off in the direction of the West In-

diaman ; but, owing to the dimness of the morning, the mists that floated upon the water, and the number of vessels that lay at anchor, he soon lost sight of the party. He waited a considerable time, in hopes that the barge might return, and afford him her services, but to no purpose ; for he found it necessary to engage another to convey him to the ship, which began to unmoor at sunrise.

On going on board, he found every thing in that state of confusion and disarrangement that always occurs at the commencement of a voyage. The captain received him with cold courtesy, and had a degree of reserve and disguise in his manner, which made Owen almost suspect that he knew his history and peculiar situation. He was haunted by a vague idea, that the lady, whose conversation he had overheard in the ruined house, was his fellow-passenger ; but he observed every one so busy, that he did not venture to make any inquiry whether or not there was a female on board.

During the first day the weather was sullen

and cold, and Owen spent most of his time in his cabin, reviewing his past life, and forming unsatisfactory anticipations about the future. A deep gloom involved his mind, and the society of Captain Harman was not calculated to dispel it; for he scarcely ever spoke, except when common civility required his doing so. The party at the breakfast and dinner table consisted of himself, Owen, and the first officer of the ship; and as the succeeding day made no addition to the number, it seemed evident that the vessel carried no other passengers.

However, at night, when Owen was going to his cabin, he unexpectedly encountered a negro woman of extraordinary appearance, carrying a lamp. He started back half alarmed; and she seemed a good deal disordered, and stood still for a few moments, and then passed hurriedly on to the gangway. Her person was remarkable for its shortness, clumsiness, and deformity; and her features were of the coarsest kind, and almost concealed by a profusion of lank black hair, through which her dark, though

small eyes, sparkled with peculiar brilliancy and intelligence. Owen's curiosity was much excited, and he lingered near the spot, endeavouring to conjecture who she could be, and to whom she belonged. She soon returned, carrying some wine, and cautiously opened the door of one of the stern-cabins, and having entered, closed it softly behind her; but not before Owen had observed the shadow of a female figure upon the walls of the apartment.

He was now convinced that the ship had, at least, one lady on board, and there was a mystery about her seclusion, that awakened a powerful interest, and made him feel anxious to see her. The vessel had two after-cabins, one of which was occupied by Owen, and the other by the unknown female. Between them ran a narrow passage, which terminated in a window that opened close to the rudder, and about four feet above the surface of the sea. Both cabins entered from this passage, and nearly opposite to each other. In front was the dining-room, extending the whole breadth of the ship, and

separated from the passage above described by a door, which was closed or kept open at the will of the inmates of the cabins, who could thus shut themselves up from all intrusion or communication with any other part of the ship. Owen was at first astonished that he never had heard the least noise in the apartment of his neighbour; but it soon occurred to him, that, as they had during the two preceding nights been sailing very rapidly, the dashing of the water around the rudder must have drowned all other sounds.

On going upon deck the following evening, he observed a lady leaning against the bulwarks near the ship's stern. It was bright moonlight, and he could distinctly see her countenance. She wore a very large shawl, which hung in folds around her figure, and entirely concealed its proportions; but her attitude and stature displayed a grace and a dignity that could not belong to any but a fine form. Her face, though pale, was lovely and expressive, with an air of imperiousness and hauteur, and a dark-

ening and flushing of the forehead, that indicated tempestuous passions. Her temples and chin had in them a marble sternness, which seemed uncongenial to the existence of the softer affections, and infused something almost repelling into her otherwise noble and beautiful countenance. Owen could not resist gazing upon her, though a sentiment of aversion and awe mingled itself with his admiration. However, she soon evaded his scrutiny, by drawing a white lace veil over her face and neck, and looking towards the sea. The negro woman stood a little way off, and continued in the same position till her mistress left the deck, and descended to her cabin.

Next day, the lady, whose name was Mrs Marburn, appeared at meals. However, her presence did not in the least degree diminish the reserve and unsociableness of the party ; for she neither spoke nor smiled, and left the table as soon as common politeness would allow. She had an air of deep déjection and constant perturbation ; and her griefs seemed to be more con-

nected with the future than with the past. Owen could not but observe she hated and feared Captain Harman, and that he conducted himself towards her in a style of assurance and implied control, which evidently had its origin from the consciousness of power, and from the privilege of employing it. They used a distant civility towards each other, mingled with a degree of bitterness and impatience ; and, in the course of their little interchanges of manner, the lady's countenance was sometimes overspread with a deadly glossiness, and an expression of calm malignity, that made Owen shudder.

When evening came, Faulconveer took his station upon deck, in hopes that Mrs Marburn might appear there also ; for, though her presence was almost painful to him, he felt a wild and agitated interest in every thing connected with her, and loved to gaze upon her, even when her looks and manner made his blood thrill. A vacant chair stood on the quarter-deck, and the negro woman was employed in spreading a shawl over it. Owen heard footsteps ascending

the gangway stairs, and presently Mrs Marburn stood before him, dressed in a blue mantle edged with white fur. He involuntarily started back, at once recognising the figure and costume of which the passing carriage-lights had afforded him a glimpse while in the ruined house at Blackwall. The lady bent her eyes keenly upon him for a moment, and then passed on to her seat, and became absorbed in thought. Owen began to pace backwards and forwards, and every time he looked at Mrs Marburn he became more convinced of her identity with the female whose conversation he had overheard before embarking. He tried to recall every word she had uttered, and to conjecture what was her history, and how the mysteriousness of her situation could be explained. In the meantime, the lady was not regardless of Owen, but at intervals directed penetrating glances towards him, as he passed and repassed the place where she sat ; the emotion he had betrayed on seeing her rendered him an object of curiosity ; and they mutually felt anxious to know more of

each other, though equally without the means of gratifying that desire.

Owen remained on deck till a late hour, and fell into conversation with the first officer of the ship. In the course of their talk, he inquired of his companion, if he could give him any information respecting the lady they had on board. "No," returned the young man, "that is quite out of my power; however, when we were last at Jamaica, a singular circumstance occurred, that seems to have some connexion with her history. We had got up our anchor, and were putting to sea in a rainy and blowing night, being about two miles from shore, when those on the look-out a-head gave notice that a boat was approaching. It presently came alongside, and a man, wrapped in a large cloak, and drenched with wet, leapt on board, and inquired for Captain Harman. They seemed to know each other very well, and went down to the cabin, and continued talking earnestly together for nearly half an hour. The stranger, on coming upon deck again, seemed agitated and

distressed ; and when he took leave, which he did almost immediately, I heard the captain call him Marburn, and assure him that he would effect what he desired. Our untimely visitor then jumped into his boat, which carried a sail, and was out of sight in a moment. This occurrence soon dropped from my memory ; but the name of the lady in question recalled it a few days ago, though I dare say it has no reference to her or her affairs."

Things passed on in the usual way for more than a week. The party on board continued as unsociable as ever, and wore such a gloomy aspect, that Owen ardently wished the voyage at a termination. No intimacy took place between him and Captain Harman, and he led a life of solitude and seclusion.

Several days of tempestuous weather had confined Mrs Marburn almost entirely to her cabin, and when she had appeared, her looks were more than usually desponding and agitated. It blew a gale of wind on the fourth evening, and the sea ran very high, and sometimes broke

over the vessel, which rolled and pitched in a violent manner. Owen remained upon deck, watching the storm, and the captain and seamen were actively engaged in their respective duties. A succession of loud shrieks were suddenly heard amidst the tumult of the wind and waves. Every one immediately abandoned his employment, and stood still awaiting their repetition. After a short interval they recurred, and seemed to proceed from the stern of the ship. Captain Harman rushed down the gangway stairs, followed by Owen, and entered the narrow passage that divided the two cabins, and stopped at the door of that occupied by the lady. They listened; but the dashing and bursting of the waves round the rudder prevented them from distinguishing any other noise. Captain Harman tapped at the door several times without effect, and then called Mrs Marburn by name, and requested to know what had been the cause of her cries. No reply was made; but Owen thought he heard a bustle within the apartment, like the closing of

curtains, and a sound similar to that of the lid of a chest hurriedly shut and locked. The captain repeated his inquiries, and the negro woman answered, " My mistress has been ill. She has had a fit, but is better now." " Unless Mrs Marburn speaks herself," cried he, " I will not be satisfied. Open the door immediately!" " No, no," returned the attendant ; " my lady is talking to you, but you cannot hear her voice for the roaring of the sea." Captain Harman burst the door of the cabin at one effort ; but he scarcely caught a glance of its interior before the light was dashed from the table, and every thing involved in darkness. Owen, however, short and imperfect as had been his opportunity of observation, had seen the lady lying on her cot in a state of death-like exhaustion, and with a countenance full of dismay, and her black servant standing near her, and glaring at them in a paroxysm of rage and terror. Mrs Marburn now exclaimed faintly, " Captain Harman, what does this intrusion mean? Is it for the purpose of insult? Beware ; do not

think that I am wholly unprotected." He was immediately abashed, and, after attempting an apology, and pleading his anxiety respecting her health, went upon deck again.

Owen did so likewise, though the bells of the watch warned him that it was midnight ; but he was too much occupied by the scene he had recently witnessed to feel disposed for sleep. The storm had now somewhat subsided ; but the sky and ocean were still gloomy and turbulent, and the waves continued to burst fiercely around the bows of the vessel, or to thunder against her sides, and make her tremble under their violence and impetuosity. While he sat alone he dropped asleep, and a succession of dark, wild, and gloomy images obtruded themselves upon his mind. Guilt, fear, and danger, seemed to encompass him, and he felt a mysterious presentiment that he was doomed to commit some dreadful crime, or be a partner in some atrocious deed. The ghastly countenance of Mrs Marburn sometimes glimmered through the surrounding obscurity,—sometimes he fan-

cied he perceived Captain Harman watching for an opportunity of forcing him overboard,— and sometimes persons, whom he had never before seen, evolved themselves from the darkness with upbraiding looks, and vanished frowningly away. He then fancied himself wandering in an immense and desolate plain, whitened with human bones, which lay bleaching beneath the copper-coloured glare of a fiery and unclouded sun. Suddenly vast groves of cocoa-nut and mango trees sprang up around him, and he forced his way through thickets of noxious, prickly, and venomous plants, and breathed an atmosphere pregnant with their suffocating and pestiferous exhalations, and tried in vain to escape from the bewildering labyrinth of dismal vegetation. He waded through pools of stagnant water, on which half-decayed human bodies were floating, and often was hurried into contact with their cold, dank, and livid limbs, and forced to disentangle himself from the twining embraces. At a distance he saw a long succession of coffins carried by negroes, who

wound their way through the shadiest part of the forest with frightful rapidity, and with a sound like the hollow trampling of innumerable feet. Bats, ravens, and vultures, hovered noiselessly over their path ; and indistinct sobbings, murmurs of terror, and the tolling of bells, filled the dense misty air, in which immense black palls waved to and fro with slow and funereal motion.

Owen started awake, shuddering with horror, and hastily sought his cabin ; but he found the door of the passage that led to it firmly fastened inside, and his efforts to open it did not appear to attract the attention of those within. Supposing that Mrs Marburn had used this precaution against the intrusions of Captain Harman, he was unwilling to disturb her, and therefore retired without obtaining admission. However, it soon occurred to him, that he might enter his apartment by another way ; for he had an impression that the stern-window at the end of the narrow passage was open, notwithstanding the roughness of the sea. He ascer-

tained this to be the fact, by going aft and looking below, and immediately determined to swing himself down under the jolly-boat, and on a level with the window, and to leap through it. Seizing a moment when no one appeared to observe him, he effected this, and found himself safe in the passage between the two cabins. He had just entered his own, when the door of Mrs Marburn's was cautiously opened. A stream of light flashed through the door-way, and shewed the negro woman with something in her arms. Owen staggered back as she rushed past him, for she carried a child. It was instantly precipitated from the window into the sea, and the tumultuous waves closed with sullen roar over its body. Narna recoiled a little way, and advanced again, and looked at the sea under the stern several different times, and then cautiously shut and fastened the window. The door of Mrs Marburn's cabin had been open all this time. Owen was too much engrossed by the horrible act of her attendant to observe any thing else, or to be aware that the rays of light from the apart-

ment fell upon him. Narna, when returning to it, saw him standing near her. She uttered a shriek, and sprung into her mistress's chamber, and closed the door violently behind her.

Owen entered his cabin, bewildered and agitated. His lamp had gone out, and he stretched himself upon his bed. Mrs Marburn's mysterious behaviour and unhappy looks were now explained ; and it seemed evident, that the person who had embarked with her in the boat at Blackwall was her paramour, and the guilty father of the child which her confidante had inhumanly thrown into the sea, for the purpose of concealing its birth. Owen could not be certain that the babe was alive when he saw it in Narna's arms ; but he was constantly haunted by the image of its pale little face, its half-closed eyes, and its outstretched arms—by the horrible and perturbed countenance of the negro woman, and by the fierce rushing and bursting and roaring of the waves, that followed its precipitation into them. What was to be done ? Must he turn informer against Narna ? That

was impossible; for it would implicate Mrs Marburn, and serve no good or useful purpose. He determined to remain secret, and to spare the guilty mother's life and reputation. The child had perhaps been born dead; and if so, the concealment of its birth was all that could be urged against the unhappy parent. With her errors and her criminal attachment he had nothing to do. He recollects that he was flying from the arm of justice and of punishment, and how could he consistently bring down upon others those inflictions which were so much feared and deserved by himself?

While occupied with these thoughts, he heard his door gently opened, and a stream of light from a dark-lantern illuminated the cabin. A figure, wrapped in white drapery, approached with languid steps, and the reflection from the opposite wall shewed him Mrs Marburn. She was pale and exhausted, and could scarcely support herself, but a despairing and energetic boldness flamed in her dark and sunken eyes. Her hair hung down upon her neck and

shoulders, and was parted on her forehead, the contortions and frequent flushing of which shewed what a variety of emotions were conflicting in her mind. She looked at Owen with an expression of fear, doubt, and hesitation, while he raised himself from his couch and involuntarily recoiled from her. " You may well view me with horror," said she, in a suppressed tone : " I am aware that you know my secret and my crime. I am in your power—but listen ; think not that I have risen from the bed of guilt and death for the purpose of entreating your compassion and your mercy. Answer me this !—Will you bind yourself never to disclose the events of this evening ? Your life is safe, whatever may be your decision. I do not wish to terrify you into acquiescence and submission. I could not stoop to that." She paused for a moment, and Owen replied, " My secrecy shall be inviolable. You may trust your reputation in my hands." " And can you suppose," returned Mrs Marburn, " that I will be satisfied with a promise—an idle promise ?—I know what promises are !

I have broken them again and again, and so, perhaps, have you. Swear a solemn oath, which I will dictate. If you refuse, I will not outlive the morning's dawn. Do not suppose that this is a vain threat, or doubt that I have courage to put it into execution. Let what I now do bear witness." She drew forth a knife, and made a wound in the upper part of her bosom. The blood sprang from it, and streamed down her white garments. She attempted to speak, but her face grew deadly pale, and her eyes became fixed and glassy, and she would have fallen to the ground, had not Owen started up, and caught her in his arms. Her head rested on his shoulder, and life seemed to be ebbing away. He thought she was dying, and horror-struck lest she should expire, without witnesses, in his cabin, he called Narna. Mrs Marburn instantly revived a little, and hurriedly and faintly said, " Hush ! hush ! I want no assistance. I have been too desperate. Such are the consequences of crime ! Look on me now ! Whether do I appear to value life or

reputation most? Will you take the oath?" Owen assented almost inarticulately. She turned the lantern, which she had before placed on a table, full upon the spot where they stood, and, taking a cross from her bosom, motioned him to kneel down. He obeyed, and she dropped on her knees opposite to him, and pronounced the words of a dreadful and solemn oath, having previously desired him to repeat them after her. A shuddering passed over her frame, and her countenance had a bewildered expression, and looked dazzlingly white, amidst the braids and clusters of black hair which hung in profusion around it. Her beautiful arms were specked with blood, and drops fell from the hand which held the crucifix. Owen uttered the words, but neither heard them nor knew their meaning. His respiration became hurried, and his eyes dim, and he felt a death-like faintness at his heart. When the awful ceremony was over, the lady rose with a sort of smile, and, taking up her lamp, drew a long deep sigh, and muttered, "All will yet be well." She

then folded her garments around her head and bosom, and, with slow and tottering steps, left the apartment.

Next morning found Owen stretched upon the floor, a prey to the tremours that succeeded a night of fearful dreams. It was some time before he could recollect the circumstances that had brought about the situation in which he found himself; but they gradually rose in his memory, at first with shadowy indistinctness, and afterwards in all the vividness of reality. The drops of blood that stained the planks upon which he lay formed hideous memorials of his oath, and of Mrs Marburn's desperation. While contemplating them, his eye fell upon the crucifix, which she had used in the solemn ceremony. He hastily picked it up and concealed it, and, endeavouring to appear as calm and undisturbed as possible, entered the public cabin.

No one was there, and he went upon deck. Captain Harman, who was taking his morning walk, looked at him attentively, and then exchanged salutations, with more politeness and

cordiality than he had ever before shewn. Owen, glad to escape from his own gloomy thoughts, entered into conversation with him, and they became mutually communicative and cheerful. The captain made no allusion to the noises that had summoned him below the preceding night, and Owen cautiously avoided saying any thing that might lead to a subject of such fearful and agitating interest. Mrs Marburn, as may be supposed, did not appear at the breakfast-table, and Owen heard nothing of her during the whole of that or the succeeding day.

Captain Harman continued to treat him with politeness and attention, and seemed anxious to gain his confidence; and though Owen was struck by the new style of manners assumed by the latter, he did not suspect him of any sinister designs. One evening, after a good deal of general conversation, Captain Harman asked Owen if he had seen Mrs Marburn before he came on board. "I possibly may," returned he; "but cannot say with certainty. I was not in the least acquainted with her, however." "She

is a singular woman," said his companion. Owen made no reply. "I am rather delicately and peculiarly situated with respect to her," continued he. "To explain this, I must tell you a little of her history. Mr Marburn, her husband, has a fine estate in Jamaica. She came to the island about six years ago, and resided with an uncle, who died not very long since, leaving her a considerable fortune. She was a friendless, unprotected orphan, and Mr Marburn paid his addresses to her, and she married him, rather as a matter of convenience, it is believed, than from any particular affection she had for his person. They did not live happily together; and she soon fell into such a bad state of health, that a voyage home, and a residence in England, were deemed necessary for her recovery. The nature of her husband's affairs prevented him from accompanying her across the Atlantic, and she went alone and in this ship. After some time, Mr Marburn heard, through various channels, a variety of reports alike injurious to his wife's reputation

and to his own honour. He at first doubted the truth of them, but they every day received confirmation from different sources, and he at length determined that his lady should immediately return to Jamaica. I happened to be then laying in Kingston harbour, and on the eve of sailing for London, and I was one night surprised by his coming on board just as we were putting to sea. He explained his suspicions, and gave me peremptory letters for the lady, and requested that I would bring her out with me, and endeavour to ascertain in what degree she had gone astray. He wishes for a separation, and would be glad to obtain proofs of her guilt and infidelity. I have not been able to collect any, though I believe she is even more criminal than he supposes ; but she is very deep, mysterious, and designing." Here Captain Harman paused. " You tell me an interesting story," said Owen, in a tremulous tone. " Did Mrs Marburn seem unwilling to obey her husband's commands ?" " Yes, particularly so," replied the captain. " She started a thou-

sand objections to going in my ship, and a few days before we sailed said, that her future happiness depended upon her being permitted to remain in England two months more, but that Mr Marburn's injunctions were too peremptory to be disregarded ; however, she deferred her embarkation to the last moment. Her behaviour has been very strange since she came on board. She has, you know, secluded herself almost entirely, and without any apparent reason." " I have observed all this," returned Owen ; " but perhaps she suffers from ill health." " Not so," answered Captain Harman ; " that plea never will do. What could be the cause of those shrieks that we heard in her cabin three nights ago ? Why did her woman extinguish the light when I opened the door ? Can you explain these circumstances ? To be sincere with you, Mr Linder, I suspect that you know more than you choose to tell, and that you actually have discovered some secret connected with Mrs Marburn. If so, you may safely confide it to me, and the dis-

closure will benefit us mutually. You are going to Jamaica, where, I presume, you have few friends, and would not be the worse of a wealthy and respectable one. Could you furnish Mr Marburn with any private information respecting his wife, you would serve him essentially, and he would not fail to return the obligation tenfold, and in a way that might be of incalculable advantage to you ever after."

Owen was startled by this proposal, and by the manner in which it was pressed upon him. He felt indignant at being supposed capable of selling his honour, and for a moment forgot that Captain Harman could have no suspicion that he was under an oath of secrecy. But, recollecting himself, and disguising his feelings, he replied,—“ Were I in possession of any facts injurious to Mrs Marburn’s reputation, can you suppose that I would make her ruin the foundation of my own prosperity? What have I to do with her imputed frailties, or with her husband’s projects of bringing about a separation or divorce? Even you, Captain Harman, would

do well to be cautious how you move in this business, lest you should involve your own character, and that of the unfortunate lady, without producing any real good to either party." He ceased, and his companion, looking inquisitively at him, said,—“ Mr Linder, you have misunderstood me. I do not believe you capable of unjustly calumniating any one. I proposed nothing dishonourable. You seem to take a great interest in our female passenger, and I thought you might have observed her more minutely than I have had an opportunity of doing. Perhaps you will think of this hereafter. Good night.—It is time to retire.”

Owen now perceived, that Captain Harman entertained suspicions that some extraordinary transactions had taken place below decks on the night of the tempest; but he could not imagine from what they had originated. It seemed unlikely that Narna would betray her mistress; and no one could have witnessed the occurrences in question, except the three individuals who were implicated in them. Owen determined to

be upon his guard against the snares of Captain Harman, and to endeavour to quiet the suspicions which were then operating upon the mind. Mrs Marburn had not left her apartment since the fatal night of the oath; and Owen, though very anxious to learn how she was, did not venture to make any inquiries of her negro attendant, lest he might be observed or overheard by Captain Harman, who watched him constantly, and with looks that were any thing but benignant.

They were now within three days' sail of Jamaica, and had a favourable wind. In the evening, Captain Harman took Owen aside, and addressed him thus:—"Mr Linder, have you been considering of what I proposed to you some time ago? Are you now willing to give me the information I desire?"—"I am at a loss to understand you," said Owen. "If you allude to Mrs Marburn, I must again positively decline having any concern with her affairs."—"You may repent this decision," replied Captain Harman; "and the more so, as I know

that you are well acquainted with them. Do you deny that you have had any private conversation with her, or that you are in possession of a crucifix which once belonged to her? What marks of blood are those on the floor of your cabin? I do not pretend to guess the meaning of any of these circumstances, but I wish to hear them explained. If you do so, you will consult both my interest and your own."—"Let me have no more of this!" cried Owen passionately. "It is insulting! I am unaccustomed to be questioned so freely by persons of your rank!" "Then hear me, Mr Faulconveer," returned Captain Harman, in a sarcastic tone. Owen started back. "How!—Faulconveer!" exclaimed he.—"Yes, yes, Faulconveer!" replied Captain Harman, bowing derisively. "Allow me to apologize for not having hitherto addressed you by your real name. Are you aware that you are in my power? I know your history and your crimes, and have proofs of your identity with the defaulter of—but I will not commit myself. Listen to me. If you do not

tell all you know respecting Mrs Marburn before our ship enters the port of Jamaica, I will deliver you up to the public authorities there. I need not describe what would be the consequences of this. Now my terms are before you. Make a choice. Don't say any thing; for I will not attend to it at present."

Captain Harman walked hurriedly away, leaving Owen equally astonished, alarmed, and perplexed. His first impulse was to go to his cabin, to obtain the crucifix which Mrs Marburn had formerly dropped there; but the box that contained it was gone. This circumstance at once explained how the captain had discovered his real name, and his being in possession of the trinket; for it was deposited among several letters that were superscribed Faulconveer, and were filled with details connected with his private affairs and personal involvements. Owen never had missed the box till now; and he entertained no doubt that Captain Harman had either carried it away himself, or caused it to be secretly abstracted from the cabin. His ruin

seemed inevitable ; for he never once thought of sacrificing Mrs Marburn to secure himself. It was not the oath alone that made him resolve to keep her secret ; for he would have been equally firm in his purpose of doing so, even had he not been under any promise or obligation whatever. He revolted at the idea of injuring a woman by his testimony, whatever might be her crimes and errors, unless the guardians of justice insisted upon his coming forward as a public evidence. Besides, he was not certain that the measure of Mrs Marburn's guilt was as great as he at first had supposed it to be. He could not affirm that the child was alive when he saw it thrown overboard ; and it seemed rather probable, from the previous alarm and agitation which the mother had experienced, that it had been dead.

The vessel entered Jamaica harbour on the evening of the third day, and immediately dropped anchor. The state of the weather, the darkness of the night, and the lateness of the hour, alike prevented any one from attempting

to go on shore till next morning. The rainy season had commenced in the western tropics, and the wind blew in violent and irregular gusts, accompanied with transient and dashing showers. The whole sky was covered with black clouds, which had an opaqueness, heaviness, and solidity, in their aspect, that shewed them to be surcharged with the elements of a tempest. The tide was coming in, and the ship, as the rushing waters diverged from her bow and beat against her sides, seemed moving rapidly forwards to the town of Kingston, which appeared an undefined mass of buildings, specked with twinkling lights.

Owen paced the deck in a fearful anticipation of the events of the morrow. He endeavoured to summon up resolution to meet his approaching fate with composure, and without compromising his honour, or Mrs Marburn's reputation. He was too well aware of the nature of the proofs against him, which Captain Harman had in his possession, to believe that he could escape the inquiry and examination of the civil

authorities, should his enemy inform them of his arrival in the island. He determined not to practise any evasion, nor to attempt any concealment, but at once to acknowledge his guilt, and to submit himself unresistingly to their power. He felt a satisfaction in making this resolution, which seemed a sort of atonement for his past errors, and an evidence that they were not the result of a constitutional and deliberate perversion of principle. And this was true ; for he had been seduced into a system of defalcation by the combined influences of love, delusion, and pleasure.

Owen, when he went to his cabin, found a small billet on his couch. The contents ran thus :—“ It is to be hoped that we may never see each other again. Though I confide in your honour, I cannot but hate one who has witnessed my guilt and degradation. Beware of Captain Harman. He is my enemy. Do not let him seduce you from your oath. Remember that my life and reputation are in your hands. Farewell.” Owen, as he destroyed the note,

exclaimed, “ You are safe to the last moment of my existence ! I will be secret, come what may.” It appeared to him, from the billet, that Mrs Marburn had some knowledge of Captain Harman’s intentions with respect to him ; and he began to think her rather selfish, unfeeling, and distrustful, in pressing her own situation upon his remembrance under such circumstances. However, he endeavoured to dismiss these ideas, and lay down to sleep. On awaking next morning, he recollect ed having, in the course of the night, either heard, or dreamt that he heard, the rolling of a boat against the ship’s side, and soon afterwards the noise of receding oars. He went upon deck, and inquired if any person had gone ashore since their arrival in port, and was told, that the lady-passenger had left the vessel about an hour before sunrise, under the protection of a stranger. Satisfied with this intelligence, he turned his undivided attention to his own affairs.

Owen had not spoken to Captain Harman since the conversation last related ; and the lat-

ter did not seem inclined to oppose his landing, or to molest him in any way whatever. He therefore hailed a boat that was passing near the ship, and having put his baggage into it, went on board himself, and ordered the men to take him ashore. On disembarking, he went to the hotel usually frequented by strangers, and secured accommodations there. He shortly after met Captain Harman in the veranda. They saluted each other with distant civility ; and Owen found, on inquiry, that the captain had taken up his residence in the house, and occupied an apartment very near his own.

In the evening, all the inmates of the establishment dined at the same table, and, among others, Owen and Captain Harman. The party consisted of a variety of characters, some of whom seemed rather disreputable. Their conversation was noisy and boisterous, and their manners rude and untutored ; and Owen, who had been accustomed to good society at home, was disgusted with his associates, and maintained a quiet reserve, and listened to all that pass-

ed with silent contempt. Captain Harman, on the contrary, seemed quite in his element, and appeared to understand all the jests and vulgar wit that were in circulation. But, in the midst of his conviviality, he had not failed to remark Owen's behaviour, and the supercilious expression of his countenance, and to feel a strong inclination to resent what he conceived to be open dislike and insulting hauteur.

In the course of the evening the conversation turned upon the mortality among Europeans in the West Indies, and the numbers of them that came to Jamaica for the purpose of bettering their fortunes. “I should like,” said one of the company, “to see registered in a book the names, objects, and previous histories, of all the adventurers who have ever arrived here; what disclosures would then be made! How various and substantial would be the reasons given for emigration to the tropics! Of what strange materials would we find our society composed!”—“Yes,” replied another, “many men in the island, who now hold themselves

very high, could make confessions which would cause them to be shunned even by their slaves. Every person that goes abroad, without having any professed and evident object in view, is to be regarded with distrust and suspicion." "Take care," said Captain Harman, glancing at Owen ; " your remark may apply to some of the present company."—" To prevent the possibility of that," cried a third, " let every one of us give an account of himself, and explain what brought him here. This will be realizing the idea of registry proposed by the gentleman who turned the conversation to this subject. But, should we betray our vices or follies in the course of our respective narratives, let them be treated leniently. I, for one, am ready to be sincere on such points, and will therefore commence my deposition."—" Pardon my interrupting you," said Captain Harman, " who was now very much exhilarated with wine, " but I would propose that my respected friend and passenger should first favour us ; he arrived only this morning, and therefore is the greatest stranger

in the company. Let us now hear the life and adventures of Mr Linder, *alias* —.” Owen started from the table ; “ Dare to attempt to insult me again,” cried he, “ and you will—but I see you are intoxicated—I must stifle my passion. This shall be recalled to-morrow morning. I hope I am among gentlemen.”—“ What do you say ?” exclaimed the person at the head of the table ; “ do you doubt that we are gentlemen ? First prove yourself one, sir, and we may then perhaps satisfy you respecting ourselves.” This speech created a laugh ; and Captain Harman, encouraged by the feeling which it manifested, again addressed Owen, and said, “ Allow me to apologize for my mistake in giving you a name that does not belong to you. Gentlemen, permit me to introduce Mr Faulconveer to your acquaintance.” Owen could listen no more. He sprung towards Captain Harman, under the impulse of unreflecting rage, and would have seized him had not the company interferred, and kept them asunder. Ashamed of his violence, he checked

his impetuosity, and stood still. Every eye was turned upon him with an expression of distrust and hostility ; and the party seemed to expect that he would explain and refute the mysterious hints that had been dropped by his calumniator. He could not do this. He lost all self-possession, and even the power of utterance, and, casting a look of agony on the strangers around him, rushed from the apartment.

He hurried up stairs to his chamber, and took refuge in its darkness. A succession of desperate feelings careered through his bosom, and gave birth to the most horrible phantasies. He had never till now been fully alive to the miserableness of his peculiar situation, nor suspected to what cruel insults it might expose him. Of what avail would it be to resent imputations which he could not prove to be false ? Was he daily liable to be branded as an impostor, and to feel that the accusation was a true one ? Were his happiness and good fame to be at the mercy of every idle tongue ? It was impossible to submit to all this. Something must be done imme-

diately. He left his apartment, and entered a long open veranda that extended in front of a range of bed-rooms, one of which was his own. Here he paced backwards and forwards, sometimes looking down to the street, and sometimes listening to the undisturbed merriment of the convivial party in the dining-hall below. He once or twice fancied that he heard his own name pronounced, and became convinced that Captain Harman was exposing him to his companions, and deliberately blasting his character. In the course of an hour they broke up, and Owen watched them as they successively went to their sleeping-rooms ; but Captain Harman, for whom alone he waited, did not appear, in consequence of his having returned on board ship and slept there.

Next morning Owen, after a perturbed and miserable night, left his own room, and descended to the hall. He there found several of the party of the preceding evening assembled at the breakfast-table. They received him with a degree of insolent composure and suspicious

contempt, that sufficiently proved to him that they were well acquainted with his situation and circumstances. He took his seat amongst them in silence, and with a quivering brow ; and they continued their conversation, which related to a pestilential disease that then prevailed in the towns of Kingston and Port-Royal, and was destroying immense numbers of their white population, and particularly those individuals who had recently arrived in the island. The people considered it very contagious, and it usually ran its course in eight or nine hours. The legislature had ordered that the dead bodies, instead of being buried in the usual ground, should be carried in boats to a retired spot, about three miles up the bay, and interred there. Owen was more shocked at the levity with which these circumstances were detailed and commented upon, than startled by the danger of infection which evidently threatened himself. He was occupied by too many bitter and harassing reflections to feel any anxiety about his health,

and too miserable to place much value upon life.

Humiliated, oppressed, and unhappy, he wandered from room to room during the greater part of the day, and every moment expected to see the officers of justice enter the hotel, and present their warrant for his arrest. While a prey to such thoughts, he suddenly heard a slight tumult of footsteps and voices at the door of the house, and next moment saw a number of negroes enter, carrying a sort of litter with some one in it. On inquiry, he found that the individual was Captain Harman, who had that morning been seized with the prevailing malady while on board of ship. They were now bearing him to his apartment in the hotel, in order to ensure him every care and attendance, though the violence of the attack seemed to leave little chance of his recovery. Owen was strongly affected by this information, which suddenly and entirely changed the nature of his sentiments towards the sick man. He had intended to have

called him to account for the insults he had offered, and to have made him the victim of unrelenting hostility and revenge; but he now viewed him with compassion and sympathy, and began to consider how probable it was that he himself might be reduced to a similar condition. He, however, could not altogether repress a feeling of satisfaction, at the prospect of the dissolution of a man who had the power and inclination to torment and cruelly injure him.

Owen remained in his apartment during the latter part of the day. Captain Harman's chamber was next to his but one, and he often heard the moans and delirious mutterings of the sick man, and had frequent opportunities of inquiring of his attendants how he did. Their reports were more unfavourable every time they delivered them, and his recovery seemed impossible. It now occurred to Owen, that he ought to seek an interview with Captain Harman in his last moments, and endeavour to obtain from him the box which he suspected him of having abstracted from his cabin while on board ship.

The captain could have no object in dying with it in his possession ; and Owen knew, that if the papers which it contained should fall into other hands than his own, disclosures, even more fatal to his prosperity and reputation than those that had already occurred, might probably be the consequence.

It was now about six in the evening, and Owen, when on the point of entering Captain Harman's apartment, met the master of the hotel in the adjoining veranda. "Allow me a moment's conversation with you, sir," said the latter ; " I come upon a very unpleasant piece of business ; but I hope you will not think me insolent in mentioning it ; for my own interest is nearly concerned in its issue. The gentlemen residing and boarding in this house have informed me, that you are not what you appear and profess to be, and that they will not admit you into their society again, nor patronize me any longer, unless you are made to quit the house. This hint, sir, I suppose, will be sufficient. I am distressed and ashamed to give it, and have

no doubts whatever about your respectability, but the character of my house must be kept up, and ——” “ Say no more !” interrupted Owen, almost breathless with indignation ; “ I will leave your house this very night. Begone ! Tell the villains who sent you, that I will meet every one of them, and defend my character.— Heaven grant me patience to bear all this !— Away, away with you !” The hotel-keeper retired, telling him that every thing he left behind him should be carefully preserved till he sent for it, or claimed it. Owen continued in the same spot some moments, struggling with a chaos of emotions. “ Such,” cried he, “ are the consequences of deception ! Yes, threats, insults, oppression, infamy !—Miserable fool that I am ! had I remained at home, and delivered myself up to justice, I would have been a thousand times less degraded and contemptible than I have made myself by attempting to conceal my guilt under a borrowed name, and in a foreign country !” He resolved that he should that very night seek an asylum in Port-Royal, where he

was unknown; but he did not abandon the design of obtaining an interview with Captain Harman, towards whom all his animosity was revived by the humiliating incident that had just occurred.

The evening was pretty far advanced before Owen found an opportunity of accomplishing his object; at length, when the sick man happened to be left alone, he entered his apartment, in a frame of mind that did not dispose him to assume those soothing and conciliating manners which are congenial with the solemnity of a deathbed, and adapted to calm the irritable feelings of the sufferer upon it. Captain Harman did not appear to be aware of Owen's presence for some moments. Though his dissolution was evidently approaching, his frame retained a morbid vigour and activity, and he tossed restlessly from side to side, and sometimes sat upright in his bed, waving his arms to and fro, and muttering broken sentences. "Captain Harman," said Owen, "I am unwilling to disturb your last moments;

but I come to request that you will make some slight reparation for the evil you have done me. You will not live long. You cannot now have any interest in ruining my character. On board of ship you robbed me of a box of papers. Restore it, and I will try to forgive all that has since passed."—"What do you say?" said the dying man, starting up and gazing intently upon Owen. "Who are you? O, now I recollect, Mr Faulconveer. This, sir, is quite in character. You attack and insult me when at the point of death. You had not courage to do so before, when I could have met you on equal terms. Begone; I will not answer your insolent questions. Leave me, or I will call for assistance."—"Hear me," exclaimed Owen, almost speechless with passion; "you mistake my purpose. All I require is, that you will deliver up the box and papers, which you must acknowledge to have been abstracted by yourself from my cabin."—"You are right," said Captain Harman; "that would be a great point—but I cannot agree to it. I did take the

box, or stole it, if you please. Was I not bound to secure the means of bringing to punishment a villain like yourself?"—"Do not make me desperate," said Owen, in a smothered voice. "I may forget myself, and then your present situation will be no protection to you. Time is precious to both of us. I will not longer be tantalized and maddened in this way. Shew me where the box is deposited; but if you give any alarm, I swear that your life shall be the forfeit. I am not now in a humour to temporize."—"Foolish boy!" returned Captain Harman: "Life is worth little to a man within a few hours of dissolution; but you shall use no violence." He made an attempt to alarm the attendants, but Owen placed his hand on his throat; and, having silenced him, again demanded the box. Captain Harman assented with a stern smile, and desired him to close the door of the apartment; which, being done, he pointed to a chest, and motioned that Owen should open it. The latter complied, and searched every part of it without finding

the article he wanted. He went to another, but had no better success; however, he discovered his box in the bottom of the third, and immediately drew it forth, and was on the point of hurrying out of the apartment, when Captain Harman, who had been intently watching his motions, shouted loudly to the servants below. Owen rushed back, and forced him down upon his bed, from which he was endeavouring to rise. "It is of no use," cried he, trying to release himself from Owen's grasp. "You may now do your worst. You will be caught here attempting to rob me. These open trunks, and their scattered and disordered contents, will be damning witnesses against you. Hark! I hear the people coming!" Owen was astonished and horror-struck at this unexpected suggestion; and the more so, as the perilousness of his situation increased every moment. During his perturbation he had relaxed his hold, and his victim again repeated his cries. What was to be done? Were the servants approaching? He

listened.—No, all was quiet. He placed his hand on Captain Harman's mouth.—A struggle ensued, and they both fell upon the floor, and upset a lamp which had stood near the bed ; the gauze-curtains of which instantly caught fire, and the blaze illuminated the whole room. Owen saw his adversary's face grow livid, and felt his limbs becoming cold and stiff. He sprung up with a violent effort, and raised Captain Harman likewise, who clung to him so firmly that he could not disengage himself from him. The flames had now communicated to the bedclothes ; the heat was intense, and every thing was involved in smoke. Owen, by a movement of convulsive desperation, dashed the expiring man from his embrace, and saw him reel backwards, with a visionless, ghastly, and upturned countenance, and disappear amidst the thick and suffocating smoke. An impulse of terror, as sudden and impetuous as a whirlwind, made Owen burst from the apartment, and hurry along the veranda, and

descend to the street by a staircase that communicated with the second floor of the house only.

He did not venture to cast one look behind him, but pursued his way through the darkest and most unfrequented lanes and alleys. He met almost no one, and was allowed to pass on without interruption; the people in the streets being chiefly negroes and common seamen. The lights in the houses were extinguished, and a gloomy silence prevailed, except when the deep hollow rumbling of the carts, employed in carrying away dead bodies, was heard echoing among the lofty buildings. Owen did not stop till he reached the side of the harbour. The place happened to be a retired one, and he seated himself on a stone, and tried to calm his agitated spirits, and determine upon some plan of action. He had made but little progress in accomplishing either of these objects, when his attention was attracted by a tumult of voices at a distance, and by a glare of light over the town. Observing a high wall near

him, he clambered to the top of it, and from thence beheld the upper part of a house in flames, which he knew to be that from which he had so recently fled. A multitude of negroes were collected round it; some carrying water; some working fire-engines; and some dismantling its roof. Their shouts mingled with the crackling of falling timber and the hissing of the water, and Owen felt suffocating blasts of the hot and smoky air blowing upon him, and scorching his brows. "What demon of horror pursues and persecutes me!" cried he. "Danger, mystery, fear, murder, and conflagration, have attended my steps ever since I left home. Where can I go? Who is safe when I am near? Men will soon shun me as an omen and a cause of evil. Something tells me that my destiny is already marked out, and I must hasten to fulfil it. Yonder boat will serve to convey me hence."

He now descended to the place where the boat lay, having first looked towards the fire, and observed that it was nearly extinguished,

and that the people were beginning to disperse. A negro stood by the water's edge, and Owen told him that he wished to go across with him ; and, giving him a couple of dollars, asked when he intended setting out. The fellow seemed a good deal surprised at his request ; but, after a short pause, said, “ Yes, sir, we will take you with us since you desire it. My companions are in that house. We shall start soon.” He looked attentively at Owen a second time, and then went towards the building which he had pointed out, and entered it.

Owen seated himself in the boat ; and, after remaining there nearly an hour, was beginning to feel impatient at his detention, when he saw four men advancing towards him. Three of them carried a large and apparently heavy box, loosely covered with coarse matting ; and the fourth, who was the person to whom he had recently spoken, walked before his companions, as if to clear the way. Their conversation, at first indistinct, became perfectly audible as they approached, and Owen heard one of them say,

“ Who can he be ? What can he mean by going with us ?”—“ That matters little,” returned another ; “ he has paid well for his passage, and we have no right to make any inquiries.”

Having deposited their burden in the boat, they unmoored her, and began to work their oars in silence, and often looked scrutinizingly at their passenger. “ What fire was that ? Did it do much damage ?” said Owen, anxious to divert their attention from himself, and also to learn the particulars of the accident of which he had been the unhappy origin. “ The fire, sir,” returned one of the negroes, “ was no great things. It took place in a hotel, and they soon got it under without much loss.”—“ How did it happen ?” demanded Owen, a good deal relieved by this intelligence. “ That is not so easily told,” answered his informant ; “ but it is said that a stranger robbed and murdered the captain of a ship, who lay ill in the house, and then set fire to the bed, that he might hide the manner of his death, and also made his

escape in the confusion. But some people say that the captain himself brought about the accident, by upsetting a lamp."—"It may be so," interrupted another negro; "but I think not; for the captain's trunks were broken open. Who could have done this, except the young man that left the house immediately before the fire was discovered? He is the murderer, and the officers are looking for him."—"All I know," said his companion, "is, that the dead body had no suspicious marks upon it."—"How!" interrupted Owen; "did you see the dead body of Captain —?"—"Yes," replied the negro; "and prepared it for the grave too. It is close beside you now." Owen started from his seat, and pulled away the mat, and disclosed a coffin underneath. He drew back shuddering, and retired to the stern of the boat. "Thank God I am not his murderer!" exclaimed he to himself. "No, he died from disease. The hand of death was upon him. If he perished amidst flames and smoke, what is that to me? I did right in saving my own life.

He could not have survived many hours ;—but what mysterious fatality has again brought me into contact with one whom I so much and so justly hated ?” He turned his eyes towards the sea, and tried to dispel the hideous images that began to embody themselves in his imagination.

“ But how came this body here ?” said Owen to the negroes. “ Where are you carrying it ?”—“ To the churchyard,” replied one of them. “ All persons that die of the fatal distemper are buried on yonder shore, four miles from town. We are employed to bring over the corpses ; for no white man will touch or approach them, from fear of being infected. We were sent for, as is the law in such cases, the moment they found that the captain was dead. His body was dragged from the room where the fire began, and we instantly put it into a coffin, and removed it from the house, and brought it down to the beach. We had just arrived with it a little time before we set sail.”—“ What do you tell me ?” exclaimed

Owen. “ Then you are not on the way to Port-Royal ?”—“ Port-Royal !” returned the man, with a look of astonishment. “ No, no ; we must keep far from that. How could you think that we were going there ? I would have told you not, had you asked me.”—“ All is over,” said Owen, calmly ; “ I rejoice that it is so. I have not long to live. I must already have caught the fatal disease. Nothing can now save me !” The negroes made no reply, but looked expressively at each other, and resumed their oars, which they had dropped during the conversation. The sea was calm ; and the boat moved swiftly onwards, and soon gained the shore where lay the burying-ground. Her crew immediately disembarked with the coffin ; and, followed by Owen, proceeded through an open field, till they came to a new-made grave. The narrow crescent of a waning moon shed a dim and sickly light through a cleft, in one dark and otherwise unbroken cloud, that extended over nearly the whole sky. The atmosphere was calm to oppressiveness,

and was loaded with dank and heavy dews, which communicated a chillness to every thing they touched, and seemed to absorb the rays of light before they reached the earth. There was no sound or motion any where, except when a large bat flitted past, or when the bull-frogs groaned in concert in a neighbouring marsh. Lizards, with small eyes glittering in the moonbeam, lay under the stones, and sat half erect upon the heaved-up graves ; and unseen reptiles were heard creeping lazily among the rank and coarse herbage that covered the ground. The place was surrounded by groves of tall trees, with a thick underwood beneath them, except towards the sea-beach, where all was open and unsheltered. As no road led from this cemetery in any direction, and as no one could see what lay beyond it, its situation seemed emblematic of the shrouded isolation of death and the grave.

The negroes, after a little preparation, lowered the coffin into the earth, and hastily shovelled the soil over it. They then told

Owen that they were about to depart, and asked if he wished to return with them. "No, no," said he; "I must remain here yet awhile. I think I am dying. Leave me alone." He sat down upon the grave. A cold perspiration bedewed him, and he felt a suffocating oppression, which almost deprived him of the power of speaking. The men looked at him with pity, and walked away, muttering, that he soon would require those offices which they had just been performing for another person.

Owen did not rise till he heard the sound of their oars. He then felt a pleasure in knowing that he was utterly alone, and in a spot which was not likely to be visited by any one. He had formed no resolution about the future. Of what avail would it have been? He was denounced as a robber and a murderer, and could be proved to be a public delinquent. Every place now seemed alike to him. He opened the box, which he had almost unconsciously kept in his possession since his interview with Captain Harman; but his papers and the cruci-

fix were gone. The deceased, he supposed, had removed them ; and a disappointment was the result of all the dangers and difficulties he recently had encountered. He threw down the box, as a thing of no interest or value, and entered a clump of mango-tress on one side of the burying-ground.

He had not been long there, when he saw a white figure winding through the wood, at some distance. It advanced with slow and languid steps, and sometimes stopped for a few moments, as if irresolute whether to advance or return. Owen was too far off to observe its countenance or dress with any distinctness ; but he had no doubt, from its general appearance, that it was a female. He was struck with awe and undefined apprehension, as he watched the motions of the mysterious being, whom he could hardly regard as an inhabitant of the earth. The lateness of the hour, the solemnity of the burying-ground, and the solitariness of its situation, seemed to render it almost impossible that any one but a spirit should wander there

alone and unprotected. The graves were fresh and numerous, and most of their inmates had perished suddenly and unexpectedly ; perhaps in the midst of a career of misery, remorse, or crime. The pillows of their deathbeds had not been smoothed by the hands of friends, or by offices of domestic affection ; and they had been carried to their graves by hirelings of a race different from their own. They were outcasts and exiles, even after death had levelled all other distinctions ; and the demon of pestilence protected them from invasion and disturbance, instead of the sacred influences of pious awe and religious associations. Where could an apparition find a more congenial haunt, or be more likely to shew itself ?

Owen, during these reflections, had shrunk behind a large tree, from whence he continued to watch the figure, which had now advanced within a few yards of the outskirts of the grove. Here its caution seemed to increase, and it looked towards the burying-ground in various directions, as if anxious to ascertain if any one

was there. At length, after a minute scrutiny, it came forward beyond the trees, and into the dim moonlight, and stood motionless gazing upon the sky. Owen uttered a cry of affright and astonishment, and rushed from his place of concealment. He staggered forwards with outstretched arms, and saw before him the figure of Mrs Marburn! A loud shriek from her told him that it was not a vision, and he caught her in his arms as she was falling to the ground.

A few moments elapsed before either of them became sufficiently composed to speak. They then gazed upon each other with fixed eyes, pale lips, and ghastly cheeks, and mutually shuddered as they recollected the circumstances under which they had last met. "How comes it," inquired Owen, "that you are wandering in this wild and fearful place?"—"Alas! I hardly know," replied Mrs Marburn, dejectedly. "I believe it is because I wish to be numbered with its silent occupants. My husband resides in the vicinity of this burying-

ground. Our house is concealed by the trees. I often walk alone at night. But how much more wonderful is it that I should meet you here!"—"My mind is in a tumult," returned Owen. "I can hardly tell you any thing about myself, only that I am persecuted, ruined, and miserable!"—"Then we are fit companions for each other," said Mrs Marburn. "You know too much of my history to suppose that I can ever again be happy. You are the depository of my secret,—and I thank you for preserving it inviolate."

Owen now mentioned that Captain Harman had expressed suspicions upon the subject, and related all that had passed between them in reference to it; and described the persecutions to which he had been exposed from his having refused to betray her confidence. "Ah!" cried Mrs Marburn, with agitation, "I now perceive what object has brought you here. You wish me to relieve you from your oath. Nay, perhaps you are hastening to my husband to

disclose my guilt and shame. Go then ! take your own course ; I also can follow mine."— " Hear me !" cried Owen. " Do not insult my nature by such unjust suspicions. Your reputation is safe. By telling you who I really am, have I not trusted my own in your hands ? My tempter and persecutor is no more. Captain Harman died last night."—" Can it be so ?" exclaimed Mrs Marburn, incredulous and astonished. " Are not you deceived ?"—" Look to yonder new-made grave," returned Owen. " Not an hour has elapsed since he was laid in it."—" 'Tis well," said she, after a pause. " Peace be to his soul, though he wished none to mine. He was my bitter enemy. He sought my ruin. But I cannot curse or hate him in death. How did he die ?"— Owen hesitated. " By pestilence," said he ; " I did not kill him. You will, perhaps, ere long, hear me called his murderer ; but it is false as I live !" Mrs Marburn looked upon him keenly and fearfully, while he related all that

occurred to him, from the time of his entering the hotel down to the moment of their unexpected meeting.

When he had finished, she took his hand and said, “Mr Faulconveer, we are under the influence of the same unhappy star,—we were born to be the children of infamy; but come and hear my story. Perhaps you think me more guilty than I really am.” Owen proceeded with Mrs Marburn in silence to the foot of a large tree, upon the projecting roots of which they seated themselves, having the churchyard in front; and she immediately commenced her narrative.

“I came to Jamaica at the age of fourteen. While in England my life was passed at a retired boarding-school, and I had no opportunity of acquiring any accurate knowledge of the country, or characters or manners of its people. It is needless to relate the circumstances which brought about my removal to this island. I was placed under the care of an uncle, with whom I lived happily for five years; however,

he died at the expiration of that time, leaving me totally unprotected and friendless, but mistress of a considerable fortune."

" Mr Marburn soon afterwards began to pay his addresses to me. He was much older than myself, and—but let me pass on to other matters. In short, we were married, and continued to live contentedly enough together, till some groundless feelings of jealousy, excited by the visits and attentions of a military man, who was quartered at Kingston, destroyed all harmony and confidence between us. I can solemnly aver, that I gave this person no encouragement whatever, and that he was an object of total indifference to me in any point of view, except as a pleasant acquaintance. But Mr Marburn irritated me with insulting innuendos and suspicions, and my temper being naturally warm and impetuous, I was in the habit of repelling his insinuations with a violence that was any thing but conciliating, and which, so far from convincing him of my innocence, rendered him doubly sceptical upon the subject. It may

easily be supposed, that we daily became more and more estranged from each other. I imprudently treated him with contemptuous indifference, and he avoided my society, and began to show the greatest dislike to my person.

“ Things continued in this state for several months. During that time I had gradually been getting into bad health ; I suppose, from the effects of irritation, disappointment, and anxiety, conjoined with those of a bad climate. My illness at length assumed so formidable an aspect, that the physicians declared that my only chance of recovery lay in a voyage to England. My husband consented to this, and I joyfully hurried the preparations for my departure ; but it unfortunately happened, that the young officer, to whom I have already alluded, engaged his passage in the ship that was to convey me home, instead of taking advantage of a transport that was about to sail. Mr Marburn, on hearing this, supposed that the arrangement had been concerted between us, and forbade my going in the vessel. He proceeded on his voy-

age without me, and I waited some weeks till another opportunity of the same kind occurred. My husband intrusted me to the care of Captain Harman, with whom he seemed to be intimately acquainted. This wretch had the insolence to express a passion for me while we were at sea ; but I repulsed him with indignation, threatened to mention his conduct to my husband, and did not afterwards permit him even to speak to me. This excited his hatred, and he became my bitter enemy.

“ On arriving in England, I took up my abode with a female relation, who was a widow, and very rich, agreeable, generous, and accomplished. She lived at a charming seat of her own, in a very beautiful part of the country ; and her house was constantly full of visitors, and enlivened by every species of amusement and gayety. Here I met with my former admirer, Derwent, who had contrived to discover my place of residence, and to cultivate an acquaintance with my female friend. What a new world was opened to me at her villa ! Into how

many previously unknown pleasures was I initiated ! The society, the scenery, the climate, and the mode of life, at Felham Park, were all equally captivating and seductive. The elegance of manners, the liveliness of ideas, and the taste and accomplishments that distinguished the circle there, formed a strong contrast with the plainness, coarseness, and vulgarity, that prevailed in the society to which I had been accustomed in the West Indies. The men, in particular, seemed a different species of beings ; and their graceful attentions, brilliant powers of conversation, and refined sense of the polite, were little calculated to make me recollect with any complacency the slender pretensions of my male acquaintances in Jamaica. Mr Marburn was not in the habit of seeing much company, and what we did see was far from being the best that the island afforded. Our dinner-parties were usually composed of new-arrived adventurers, rank with provincialism, ignorant of the world, and brimful of rusticity, boisterous ship-masters, petty money-making merchants, and

now and then a planter of the third class. We had no intercourse with the polished and liberal-minded society of the island ; their style of entertaining being, in my husband's opinion, foolishly expensive and ceremonious, though his wealth was sufficient to admit of his coping with them in point of luxury and hospitality, had he been so inclined. Is it to be wondered after this, that the fascinations of Felham Park should dazzle and intoxicate me, and that I should nearly forget my husband, and feel unwilling to return to Jamaica ?

“ But the society in which I lived had even less influence upon my heart than the scenery and climate of Britain. I had always been an enthusiastic admirer of the beautiful in nature ; but how could my taste be gratified in the West Indies ? They alone who have resided long in tropical countries can well appreciate the exquisiteness of European scenery, and be fully alive to the interesting associations which are connected with almost every one of its features. Can the unchanging skies, the hot atmosphere, the fiery,

unrelenting sun, the turbid rivers, and the coarse, exuberant, and gaudy vegetation of the torrid zone, be compared with the variously-clouded heavens, the soft air, the gentle light, the transparent streams, the delicate verdure, and fragrant flowers of northern climates, where nature is constantly administering to the enjoyments of life in some form or other? Poets may deceive themselves, and travellers may impose upon people, by describing tropical countries as the seat of innumerable pleasures and luxuries, and as regions in which love exists in its greatest strength and purity, and where all the best affections of the human heart are developed and brought into play. I have not found such to be the truth. It seems to me, that the Europeans who live in hot climates are, generally speaking, a selfish, unfeeling, and unrefined, set of people, and that their lives are as barren of real enjoyment as they are fruitful in causes of suffering, irritation, and discontent.

“ These feelings, it may be supposed, at-

tached me not a little to England and to Felham Park, the neighbourhood of which abounded with the finest scenery. Derwent's attentions were unceasing. We walked together through lonely woods, explored sequestered valleys, ascended hills and eminences, contemplated ancient ruins, and watched the setting sun and rising moon, and the accompanying gorgeous drapery of the heavens. My female friend prolonged her stay in the country till the end of autumn; and I had an opportunity of observing the changeful beauties of that divine season. I marked the green of the leaves fade into the various diversities of tint that precede their decay, and heard the temperate storms of England blowing through the woods, and scattering the withered foliage. In the evenings we closed the shutters and window-curtains, and assembled round a large fire, and enjoyed all the social pleasures in perfection. When our party happened to be numerous we had concerts of music; and when small, we passed the hours in light gay conversation,

story-telling, games, and pastimes. My spirits were always buoyant and elastic; and I used to regret when the clock announced midnight, and wish to prolong our vigils almost till dawn.

“ But, on going to bed, I usually yielded to regret and despondency, and anticipated with dread the period when it would be necessary for me to return to Jamaica. I contrasted the life I had led there with what I now enjoyed, and the comparison attached me more and more to England. I could not bear the idea of again encountering my husband’s untutored companions,—of spending the day in the monotonous seclusion imposed by a tropical climate,—of passing my languid evenings in a lonely and comfortless apartment, without the blazing fire, the social countenances, and the ever-varying sources of amusement that enlivened my friend’s parlour,—and of knowing that every day was to bring the same tiresome routine of heat, and sunshine, and idleness, and bodily exhaustion.

“ Derwent had all this time remained at Felham Park, and paid me devoted attention. My affections were entangled before I was aware. I tried to resist and overcome the criminal attachment; but the struggle was quite uncongenial to my character, which had not been formed upon moral principles, or considerations of right and wrong. My friend was too much engaged with her amusements and numerous acquaintances to perceive the dangerousness of my situation; while the peculiar tone of my feelings, as already described, tended to make me desperate, impetuous, and careless about the future. I yielded myself up to Derwent, and sacrificed my honour.

“ Shortly after our guilty intercourse had commenced, I received a letter from Mr Marburn, desiring that I should immediately return to the West Indies, as he had heard that my health was completely re-established. His summons came unexpectedly, and brought fear, shame, and humiliation with it. I was irresolute what to do; and, while deliberating upon the

subject, lost several favourable opportunities of setting sail for Jamaica. Derwent used every persuasion to induce me to defer my departure for some months; and though I positively refused to comply, the weeks that glided away, and saw me still at Felham Park, were evidences of the infirmity of my purposes, and of my disinclination to join my husband. The consequences of our intimacy were now apparent. I was within two months of bearing a child. My female friend, with all the coolness of fashionable feeling, hinted that I should now go into retirement, as her own reputation would be involved with mine were I to remain any longer under her protection."

" I had not another asylum to which I could fly. Derwent proposed that I should go into a distant part of the country, or upon the continent; and I was upon the point of resorting to one of these alternatives, when I was alarmed and astonished by a visit from Captain Harman. He explained his business without much preamble, telling me, that, when last in Jamaica,

he had received positive orders from Mr Marburn to bring me out in his ship, as the letters which he presented would shew. He then departed, requesting that I would commence preparations for the voyage, as he intended to sail in two or three weeks.

“ My wretchedness and agony were now extreme, and I several times almost determined upon committing suicide. However, I soon sunk into a state of torpid despondency, and became careless of reputation, and of every thing else. Derwent had been called away from Felham Park to London, where his father, a man of rank, forced him into a marriage with a lady to whom he had formerly engaged himself, but who had been in a fair way of being entirely neglected and forgotten from the time that our attachment had commenced.

“ I was now without a single friend or protector; for, though Derwent offered to assist me in every possible way, I was not ungenerous enough to allow him to injure himself and his wife, by having any further intercourse with me

whatever. I hired lodgings in town, ardently hoping, that my confinement might take place before Captain Harman sailed, and intending to go into concealment if it did not. But he watched me continually, checked my drafts for money, and used every precaution to prevent my elopement. At length I received an intimation that it was time for me to embark, and I obeyed it. Derwent insisted on attending me to Blackwall, and we there took a last farewell of each other, in a ruined house by the side of the Thames. The rest of my story is known to you. I cannot dwell upon it. Only let me assure you, that the child you saw precipitated into the ocean was born dead. Heaven is my witness that I am not a murderer! That is a depth of guilt into which I would not have plunged myself to save either my life or reputation."

Here Mrs Marburn finished her narrative; and Owen could not help viewing her with more forbearance and sympathy than he had hitherto done. They both sat silent for some time, with eyes fixed upon the burying-ground, from the

surface of which a dark mist was evolving itself, and condensing into a stratum of vapour, that concealed and rested upon the graves.

“Where do you now intend to direct your steps?” inquired Mrs Marburn.—“Alas! I know not,” answered Owen; “every place of refuge is closed against me. If I return to Kingston, I have every chance of being seized and put in confinement. I think I will proceed to Port-Royal, where I am as yet unknown; but it is of little consequence; for, believe me, I am indifferent to what may befall me.” The lady reflected a little, and then said, “No, Mr Falconveer, you shall come with me. I can provide you with an asylum till to-morrow morning. You must then go to my husband, and tell him that you have left Kingston to avoid the pestilence, and that you wish to be permitted to occupy the small house on his estate that is at present untenanted. He will not object to this, and you can send privately to Kingston for the articles which you have left there.” Owen, after a pause, replied, “I thank you for

the interest you take in my safety and welfare, and would, without hesitation, adopt the plan you propose, were I certain that there was no chance of your being involved in any difficulty on my account."—"None, none," returned the lady in a faltering voice ; "but let us leave these regions of death. Follow me in silence."

They now rose from the foot of the tree ; and Mrs Marburn, after passing through the darkest part of the grove, struck into a narrow winding path, and quickened her pace considerably. Palm and mango trees of the largest size grew on every side, and intermingled their gigantic boughs overhead, and nearly excluded the faint and hazy moonbeams. The forest was perfectly motionless and silent, there not being a breath of wind to agitate the foliage. Sometimes, however, a snake was heard stealing along among the dry grass ; and sometimes a bird, scared by the approaching footsteps, would burst with a loud rustling from its perch among the boughs, and take flight to a distant part of the grove. Mrs Marburn occasionally looked

round at Owen, who followed close behind ; and a ray of light fell upon her countenance once while she was doing so, and shewed its expression to be that wild and fearful one which had formerly excited his shuddering dislike. The strangeness of his situation, and his uncertain fate, filled his mind with the darkest forebodings. He almost began to suspect that his female guide was the apparition of Mrs Marburn, and that it was conducting him to some unearthly spot, where a horrible fate awaited him.

They had walked nearly a quarter of a mile, when Owen discerned a white mansion glimmering among the trees. His conductress stopped for a few moments, and looked cautiously round her, and then directed her course along the outskirts of the grove, till they came to a small half-ruined building, in the midst of a clump of orange-trees. It seemed to have originally been intended for a summer-house ; but the roof was now decayed, the windows were broken, and the old shackling door would

scarcely turn upon its hinges. Mrs Marburn entered in silence, and Owen followed her with anxious steps. The apartment inside contained only two chairs and a small table; and its atmosphere was dank, oppressive, and chilly. "Good night! Mr Faulconveer," said the lady. "Remain quietly here till morning. Do not stir till I give you notice." She then waved her hand, and was out of sight before Owen had time to make any reply.

He seated himself in one of the chairs, and tried to compose his spirits; but, finding this impossible, he began to walk backwards and forwards, and to examine the apartment as narrowly as the dim moonlight would admit. He felt wakeful and agitated without knowing why, and was haunted with fears of some secret evil and impending danger. Every noise startled him, and he scarcely dared to look from the window, lest some frightful object should present itself.

He once or twice determined to leave the

summer-house, and to spend the night in the neighbouring grove; but the recollection of Mrs Marburn's parting injunctions, and the risk of being discovered by any one, made him abandon this design as often as he had formed it. He endeavoured to conquer his alarm, and lay down on the floor, and covered his face with his hands. He sometimes fancied that he heard footsteps pressing the floor above him, and sometimes thought he could distinguish voices whispering in the lower part of the building. He raised his head fearfully, but could see nothing; for the moon was now setting, and only a few sickly yellow rays struck through the window of the summer-house, and fell upon the upper part of the wall. While anxiously watching the departing light, he heard a small pebble hit the window, and immediately afterwards something fell close beside him, and rolled along the floor. He did not move, and scarcely breathed, for some minutes. The signal was not repeated; and he began to grope

about in search of the object that had been projected towards him ; but the darkness prevented him from finding it.

Exhausted by the agitating events of the last twelve hours, he at length fell asleep, and did not awake till the sun was blazing high in the heavens. The first object that attracted his attention was a small piece of wood lying near him, with a note tied to it. He hastily opened the paper, and found that it contained instructions for him, in Mrs Marburn's handwriting, directing at what hour he should visit her husband, and in what manner he should prefer his request respecting the house which she wished him to occupy.

Owen adjusted his dress as well as possible, and set out for Mr Marburn's mansion, which stood about a quarter of a mile from the summer-house, in the midst of a grove of palm-trees. It was an old gloomy-looking building, partly decayed, and had an air of solitariness, seclusion, and melancholy, about its exterior. Owen was introduced into a large apartment,

scantly furnished. The rain had dropped through the ceiling in some places, and stained the walls, on which hung several portraits ; and, among them, one of Mrs Marburn, evidently taken in her early life, but yet exhibiting much of that wild peculiarity of expression which now predominated in her countenance.

In a few minutes Mr Marburn entered the room, and bowed coolly to Owen, and requested him to be seated. He was a man of slovenly appearance, ungraceful manners, and austere visage. Owen explained the object of his visit as concisely as possible, and Mr Marburn made no remark whatever till he had done speaking. “ How did you come across from Kingston, sir ? ” said he ; “ I have not seen any boat near the beach this morning.” — “ I landed very early,” replied Owen, with some hesitation and embarrassment.— “ Pardon me,” cried Mr Marburn, after a pause ; “ but you have not favoured me with your name.” — “ My name is — Linder,” returned Owen. “ Ha ! Mr Linder ! ” exclaimed the former, in a tone of

astonishment. "Do I see you here? Forgive my surprise," continued he, apparently recollecting himself; "but I yesterday heard that a person of your name had died of the fever. This was the cause of my emotion. Yes, Mr Linder, you may take possession of the house when you please. I will order some furniture to be put into it to-day, and dinner shall likewise be sent to you, as I suppose your servants and baggage have not yet arrived. I would request your company here, that I might introduce you to Mrs Marburn, but she is rather unwell at present." Owen thanked him, and took leave, attended by a negro, who was to conduct him to his new habitation.

The house intended for him was situated near the sea, on a range of cliffs, about sixty feet above the level of the beach. Within a little distance of the building these cliffs were indented and divided by a large chasm, which extended inwards, in a straight line, about three hundred yards, and narrowed gradually towards its termination. The bottom of it was covered

with loose fragments of rock, and was on a level with the beach ; and the sea, at full tide, rushed into it with a loud roaring, and advanced to its very extremity. Its sides, which rose about eight feet perpendicular, were almost covered with prickly-pear and other thorny plants. The path which led from Mr Marburn's mansion, to the dwelling now tenanted by Owen, was sheltered on one side by several rows of lime-trees, and wound along the edge of the chasm, and was rather dangerous, the ground under it having shot in several places.

Owen remarked all this on his way to the house, which he found to be in a very decayed and uncomfortable state. However, several negroes, bringing some articles of furniture, soon arrived ; and these, when arranged in one of the upper apartments, improved its appearance very much. But personal convenience was a consideration of no moment to Owen at such a time ; and he sat at a window the whole day, looking at the sea, and a prey to all sorts of vague apprehensions and fearful uncertain-

ties. No provisions were brought him, though twenty hours of abstinence would have rendered a meal both acceptable and reviving.

Owen continued at the window till the last glow of sunset was fading from the sky, and every object was becoming dim and undefined. But the thickening twilight did not prevent his discovering several negroes lurking in the cavities and recesses of the rocks, immediately under the back of the house, from which a narrow path, winding along the face of the precipice, afforded the means of descending to the beach. Every circumstance that does not admit of immediate explanation awakens alarm and distrust in the minds of the guilty. Owen was at a loss to imagine what these men could be doing in such a situation. Were they smuggling? Were they trying to escape from their master? Were they placed there to watch him? All these questions suggested themselves by turns; but he could not frame a satisfactory answer to any one of them, nor had the means of obtain-

ing any information that might enable him to do

While any light remained, he at intervals perceived the negroes looking from their hiding-places, and then quickly withdrawing their heads again, as if watching for something, and at the same time afraid of being observed by any one. “Would to God I were dead!” cried Owen. “What a life of fear, anxiety, and agitation, have I led since I landed on this accursed shore! But it cannot last. Things must come to a crisis soon. Let me be passive, for resistance can avail me nothing.”

He was about to lay down on the bed that had been prepared for him, when he heard the door of the house gently opened, and footsteps ascending the stairs, and the next moment Mr Marburn stood before him. He motioned to Owen to remain quiet; and, having seated himself on the couch, spoke thus:—

“Mr Linder, let us throw aside ceremony. I have come here on business of life and death.

At once, then, I tell you, that I know who you are, and am acquainted with the circumstances that have driven you to seek refuge here. You came from England in the ship with my wife and Captain Harman, who died yesterday ; but in what manner, you can perhaps inform me better than any other person. He was a devoted friend of mine ; and the very day he entered port, he sent me some papers, which prove you to be Faulconveer the defaulter ; and also a crucifix, which once belonged to my wife, but which had been in your possession for some time. He told me that some mysterious and guilty transactions had taken place in Mrs Marburn's cabin, and that you were either implicated in them, or were acquainted with their nature ; but would not disclose any thing concerning them. I have this day been informed that you are suspected to have robbed, and perhaps murdered, Captain Harman ; and that a box, formerly belonging to him, has been found in the burying-ground near this, and bears damning evidence against you. The officers of jus-

tice are now in search of you, but do not as yet know where you are concealed. Don't you perceive the terribleness of your situation ? Your life is in my hands ; but you may purchase it at an easy rate. Tell me all you know about Mrs Marburn, that I may obtain the means of getting rid of her for ever. If you agree to this, I will pledge myself to provide you with the means of quitting Jamaica in safety. If you refuse to comply, infamy, imprisonment, and perhaps a scaffold, await you. Did not Mrs Marburn bear a child when on board of ship ?" Owen made no reply. " Fool ! fool !" exclaimed his impetuous questioner ; " Is not your silence a virtual acknowledgment of her guilt ? But I must have something more. Make your decision ! Escape from hence is impossible ; for I have posted a guard of slaves on the cliffs below. If you hesitate to speak from concern for Mrs Marburn, let me tell you, that she is unworthy of so much consideration. She has long embittered my life. I love another woman.— Furnish me with the means of obtaining a di-

vorce, and I will save you now, and make your fortune afterwards."—"God keep me from breaking my oath!" cried Owen, almost involuntarily. "Oath!" returned Mr Marburn. "Oath! ha!—I have it now. She has bound you by an oath! You now have made half the confession which I require, and it would be useless to hesitate to complete it. Speak on!"—"Away! away!" cried Owen; "you distract me! I know not what I have been uttering." He put his hand on his brow, and, after a short pause, said, more calmly, "Mr Marburn, allow me time for consideration. One hour—two hours!—There can be no objection to this; for you know that I cannot escape." Mr Marburn paced the room for some time, and then answered, "Well, be it so! I will give you time to prepare your confession. I will return at midnight." He departed; and Owen was once more left entirely alone.

Darkness and silence now encompassed his dwelling, except when a flash of lightning

glared upon the heavily-clouded horizon, or a gust of wind swept with wild moanings along the beach. Sometimes a few large drops of rain were dashed against the window, and every thing portended the approach of a tempest. The murmuring of the waves gradually increased in loudness, for the tide was fast rising. It at length reached the mouth of the chasm, and began to rush into it with a tremendous roaring. The noise of the water beating against the fragments of rock that covered the bottom of the ravine, and a confused dashing and bursting, like that of conflicting currents, rose from its dark abyss, and mingled with the sighs of the blast that now careered impetuously through the neighbouring groves.

At this time the door of Owen's apartment was slowly and hesitatingly opened, and a figure, wrapped in a large cloak, and followed by another, carrying a basket, entered with cautious steps. The former threw aside the cloak, and Mrs Marburn stood revealed before him.

She was pale and agitated, with disordered dress, and hair dripping wet, from exposure to the wind and rain.

“ Mr Faulconveer !” said she, hurriedly, and in a half-whisper, “ you must think me very unfeeling, in not having visited you or sent to you before this; but I could not do either consistently with our mutual safety. My presence here in this tempestuous night will, however, I hope, redeem my neglect in your eyes. You must be exhausted with want. Here are refreshments. Let me entreat you to partake of them.” She now took the basket from her attendant, who proved to be Narna, and placed its contents upon the table, and motioned Owen to seat himself before them. “ No, no ! pardon me,” said he, in a faint voice ; “ I cannot eat now ; but I will drink some wine.” She poured out a large glassful, and presented it to him without speaking, and when he had finished it, gave him a second. She then put aside the bottle, with a long, deep, shuddering sigh, and became pale and

apparently terror-struck, and leant upon her woman.

“ My husband has been here,” said she. “ I have watched his motions; and I know what was the object of his visit. He is in possession of evidences against you which may cost you your life. Did he not threaten to deliver you up to justice, if you refused to betray me?”

—“ You say true,” returned Owen; and related, as quickly as possible, all that had recently passed between Mr Marburn and himself. “ When does he return to hear your decision?” cried the lady eagerly. “ Will you indeed sacrifice me?”—“ You are safe!” answered Owen. “ Did I not swear?”—“ When will he return?” demanded Mrs Marburn again. “ At midnight, I believe,” replied Owen. “ 'Tis well!” exclaimed the lady. “ 'Tis well! I have nothing to fear! But you are pale, Mr Faulconveer. Do you suffer pain?”

“ It is not pain,” said Owen falteringly. “ I grow faint! I can scarcely stand! How is this? Give me some more wine. Do not look

upon me so wildly. I saw you thus in a dream last night. I fancied that I lay in your arms, and that you first smiled, and then looked as you do now, and next moment stabbed me in my back. But this surely is no dream!" He staggered forwards, and dropped on one knee. "Ha! now a light breaks upon me. Woman! woman!—you have given me poison! I feel myself dying! Is it so? Do not deceive me!" Mrs Marburn clasped her hands, and uttered a wild shriek, and attempted to rush from the apartment. Owen sprung forwards, and seized her, and held her firmly in his arms. "You shall not depart," cried he, "till you have satisfied my doubts. Am I to live or not? Answer me, or I will shout forth your crime till it reaches the ears of your husband!"—"Hush! hush!" murmured the lady, in shuddering affright. "Yes!—yes!—You *are* poisoned! Do you ask what fiend tempted me to be guilty of such ingratitude? I could not feel myself safe while you were in life! Kill me!—but do not upbraid me!" Owen dropped upon the

floor, and she started from him with a look of dismay, and hurried from the house.

Owen rose slowly and languidly from the ground. Cold thrillings pervaded every limb, and his ears rung with unearthly sounds. A multitude of dreadful shapes seemed to be hurrying about the apartment, and throngs of frightful faces looking in upon him through the window. A sensation of fiery heat and suffocating oppression suddenly urged him to seek the open air, and to face the tempest. On leaving the house, he hastened along the side of the chasm, regardless of danger, and indifferent to the rain, wind, and appalling darkness. He had not proceeded far, when he heard a sudden shriek near him, and a flash of lightning shewed a white figure rushing across his path. The unknown being darted away before him, and he pursued it to the edge of the chasm, and, seizing it, found that he again held Mrs Marburn in his arms. She faintly and convulsively muttered, “Save me!—Save me!” and struggled to get free. The loosened earth shot away

under their feet, and they disappeared from the brink of the precipice.—Next morning neither Caroline Marburn nor Owen Faulconveer could be found ; but fragments of a female dress, and streaks of blood, and torn shrubs, were observed among the thorny brushwood that covered the face of those cliffs, on the top of which the guilty pair had last met.

THE END.

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